Vagabond
vol. 32

...
MISSING AN ARM?

#279 | Admiration

#279 | Admiration

OR IS THAT JUST HOW HE HAPPENS TO BE STANDING ...?

HIS STANCE THIS WHOLE TIME HAS BEEN COVERING FOR HIS RIGHT SIDE...

OR DID THIS HAPPEN RECENTLY?

I'VE NEVER HEARD ANYTHING ABOUT ITŌ ITTŌSAI BEING A GREAT ONE-ARMED SWORDS-MAN.

BE CAREFUL.

I WAS ABOUT TO FALL INTO A DANGEROUS TRAP.

STOP THINKING.

ZSHH

HM?

FSHH

INTEREST-ING.

WHAT'S THAT CIRCLE?

FS

HH

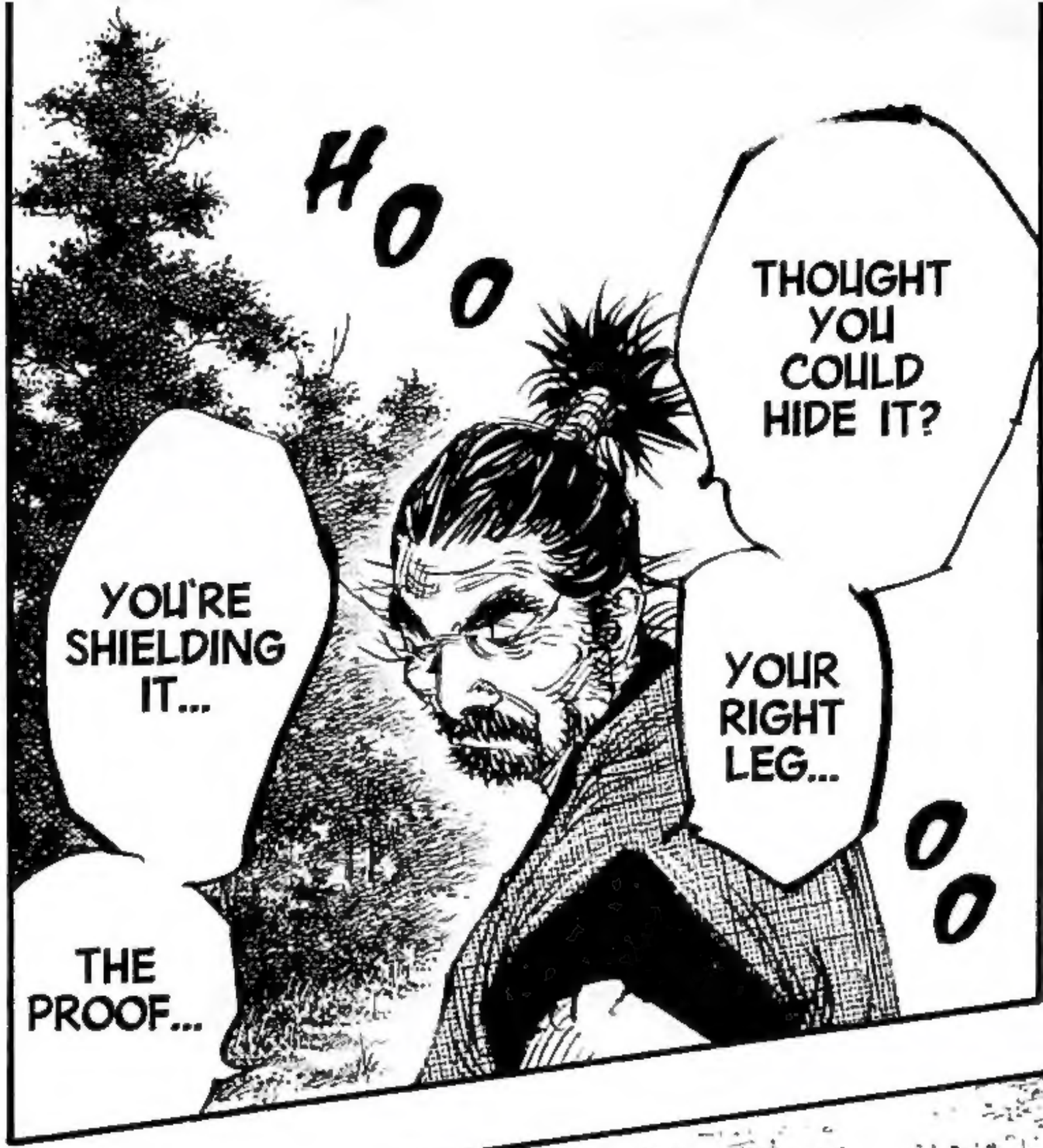
SO THE YOSHIOKA GOT YOUR LEG.

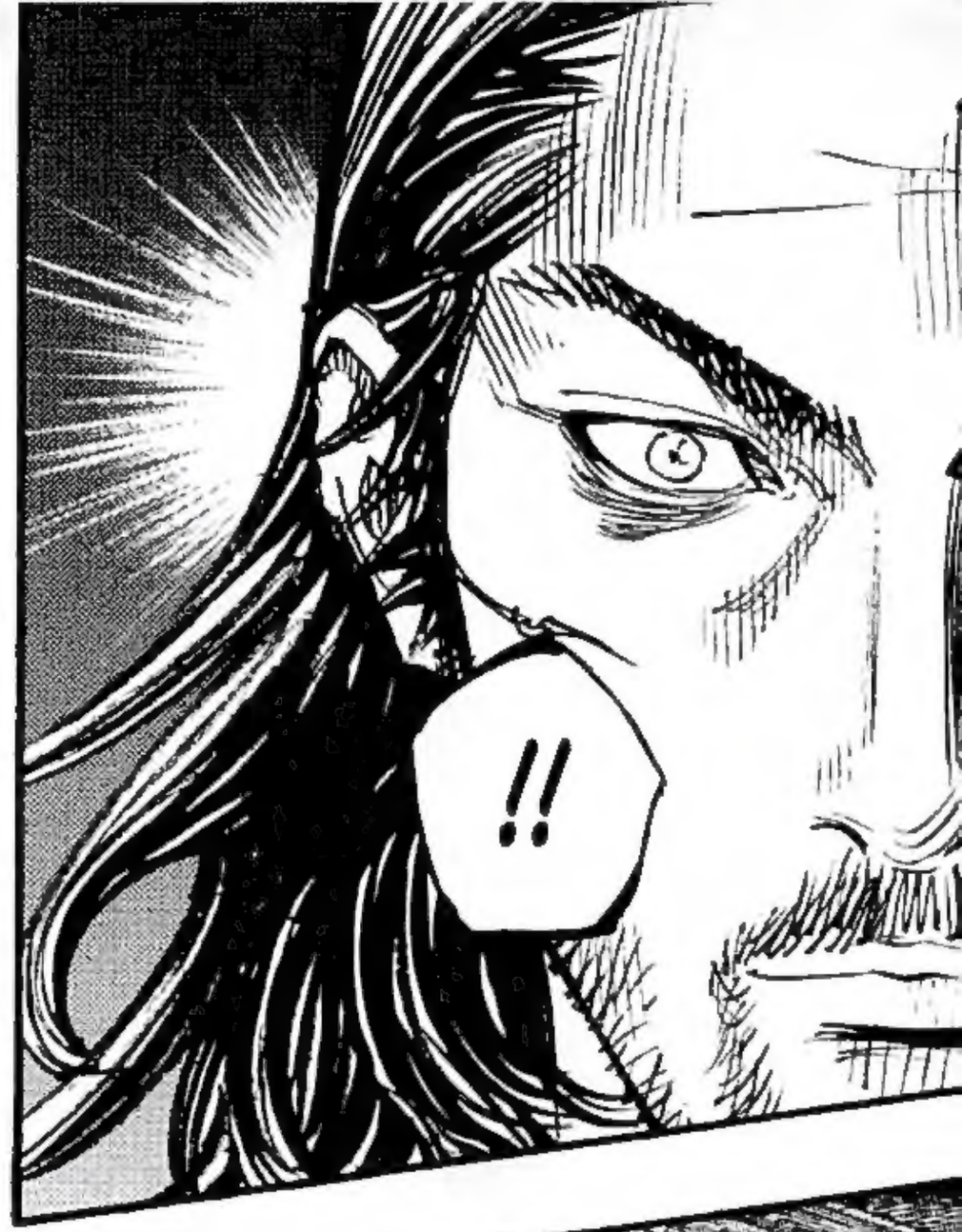
FSHH

FSHH

FSHH

...





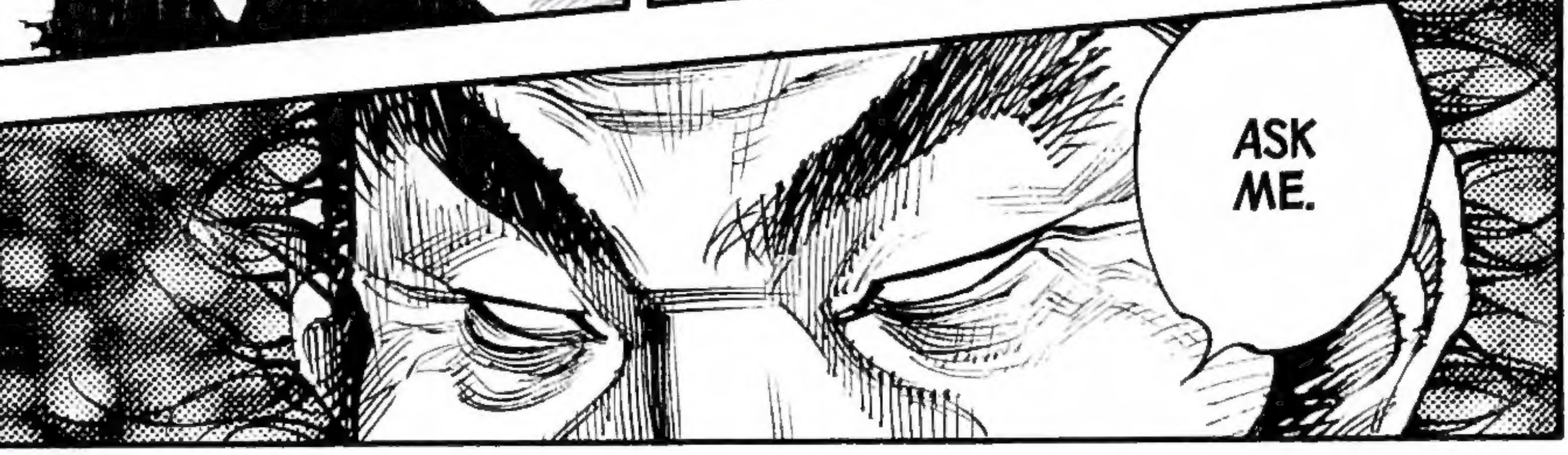
YOUR CORE IS OFF CENTER.

...!!

FSHH

...?

GO AHEAD AND ASK ME...
...WHAT THE CIRCLE'S FOR.


ASK ME.

SMIRK

UH...
...
WHAT'S THE CIRCLE FOR?

THAT'S THE RANGE OF MY SWORD.

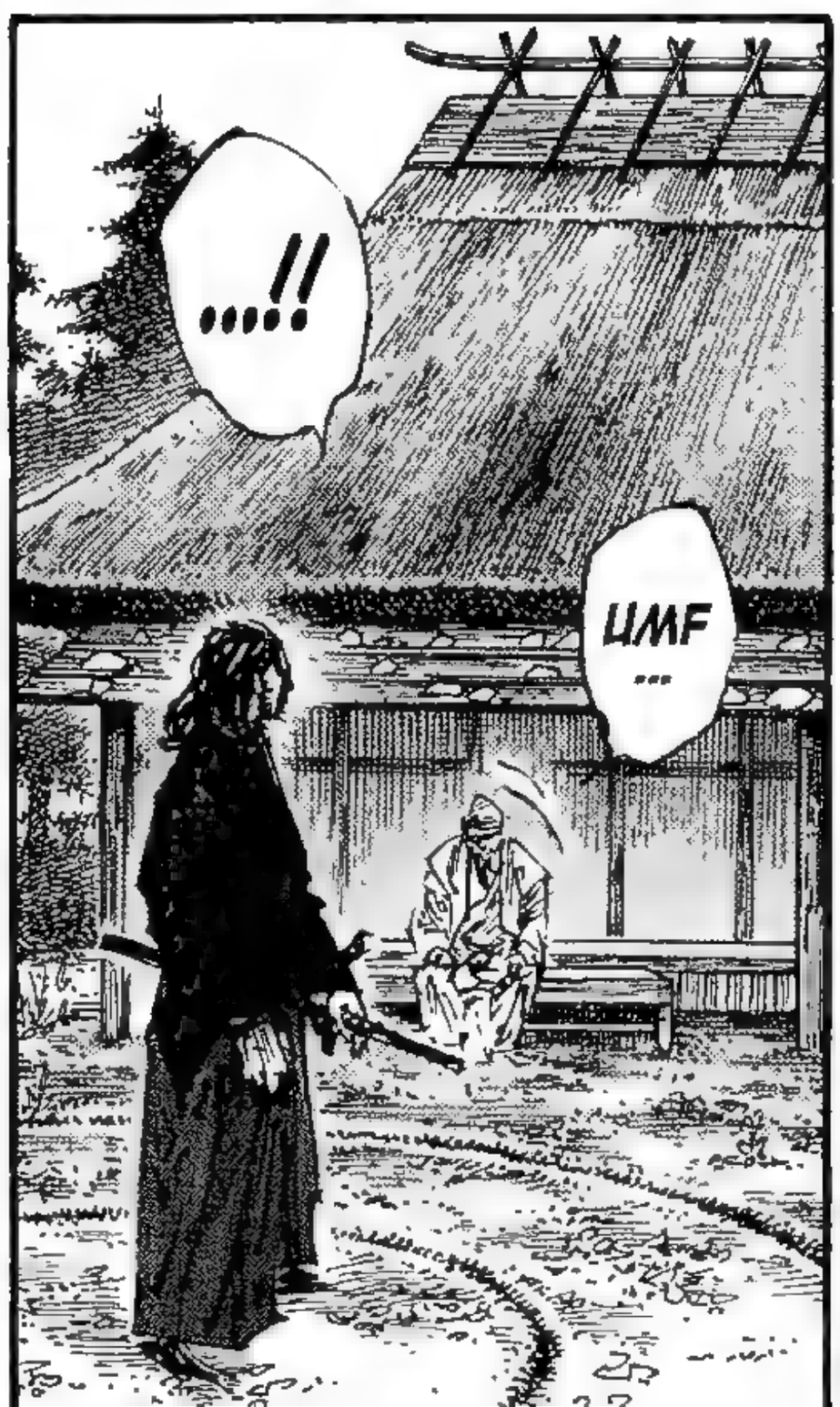
I'LL CUT DOWN...
...ANYONE WHO ENTERS.

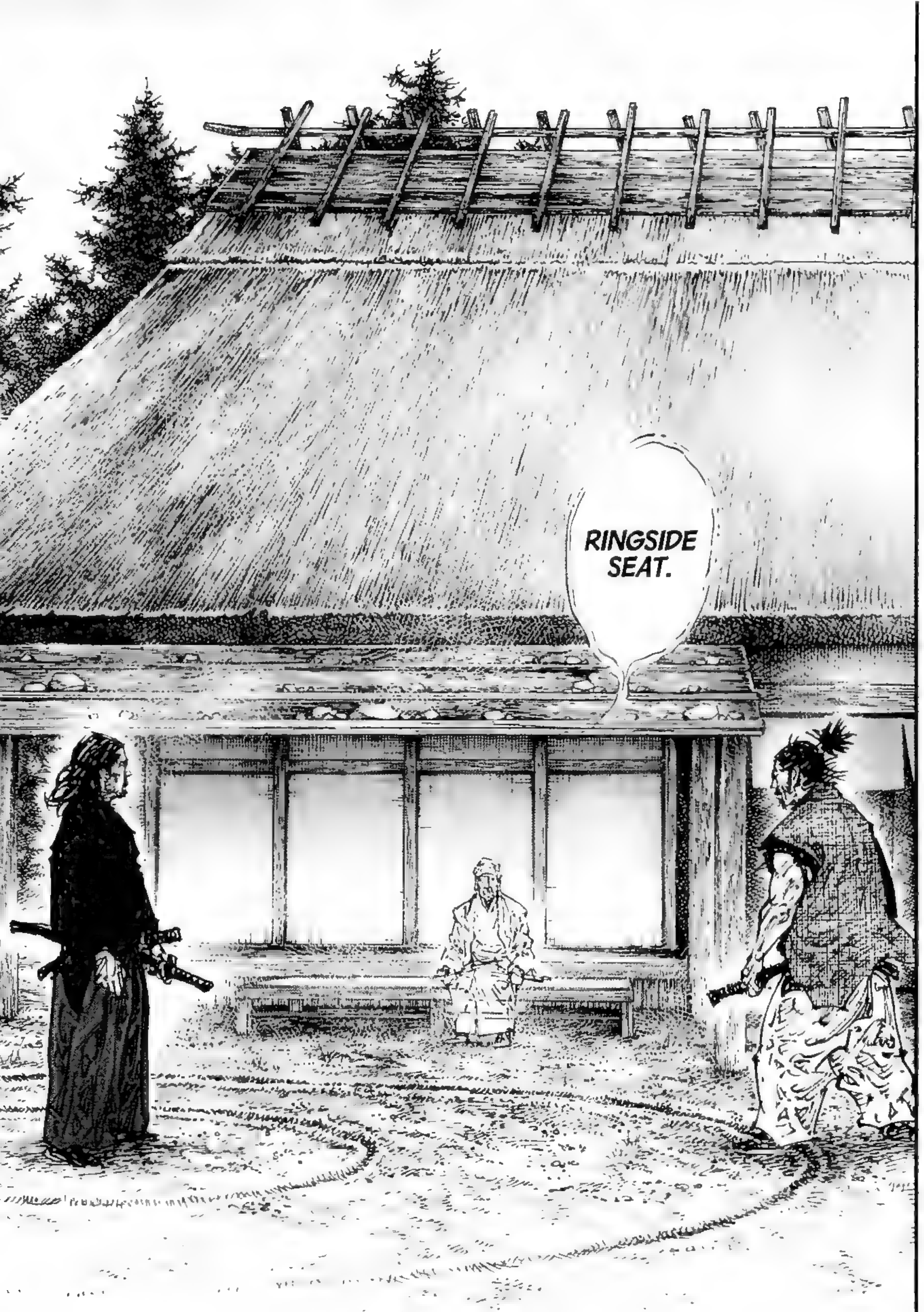
NOW DRAW YOUR SWORD.
I'LL CUT DOWN...
...ANYONE WHO ENTERS.
...
!
HM.

NOW DRAW YOUR SWORD.
...
!
HM.

!!

TUP TUP TUP




RINGSIDE SEAT.

OLD MAN...

MY LORD.

...

HE'S FALLEN INTO A COMA.

THIS MAY BE HIS TIME.

PLEASE CALL OUT TO HIM.

MY LORD.

MY LORD!

PEE!

I NEED TO PEE!

TIRMP

TIRMP

I DON'T EITHER! I HAVE TO GO REALLY BAD!

WE DON'T HAVE TIME!

NOT AGAIN, JŌTARŌ!

I HOPE WE MAKE IT IN TIME.

WE'RE ALMOST THERE.

YOU MUST BE TIRED, OTSŪ.

BUT I'M WORRIED ABOUT LORD YAGYŪ.

I'M FINE.

PLSHH

PHEW

DEAR LORD...

HOLD ON!
DON'T LOOK!
NUMBER TWO?
COME ON, TARO-CHIN.

HURRY!
OKAY, OKAY!

I KILLED HIS DOG.
BOY, I DON'T WANT TO GO TO THE YAGYŪ. BAD MEMORIES.
AND I FELL INTO THAT HOLE.

REALLY?

THE FAMOUS SWORDSMAN ITŌ ITTŌSAI ONCE STAYED AT OUR INN.

ADMIRATION

I STILL REMEMBER THAT DAY.

JUST AS I EXPECTED...

HE'S JUST AS I'D IMAGINED.

SUCH AMAZING STRENGTH.

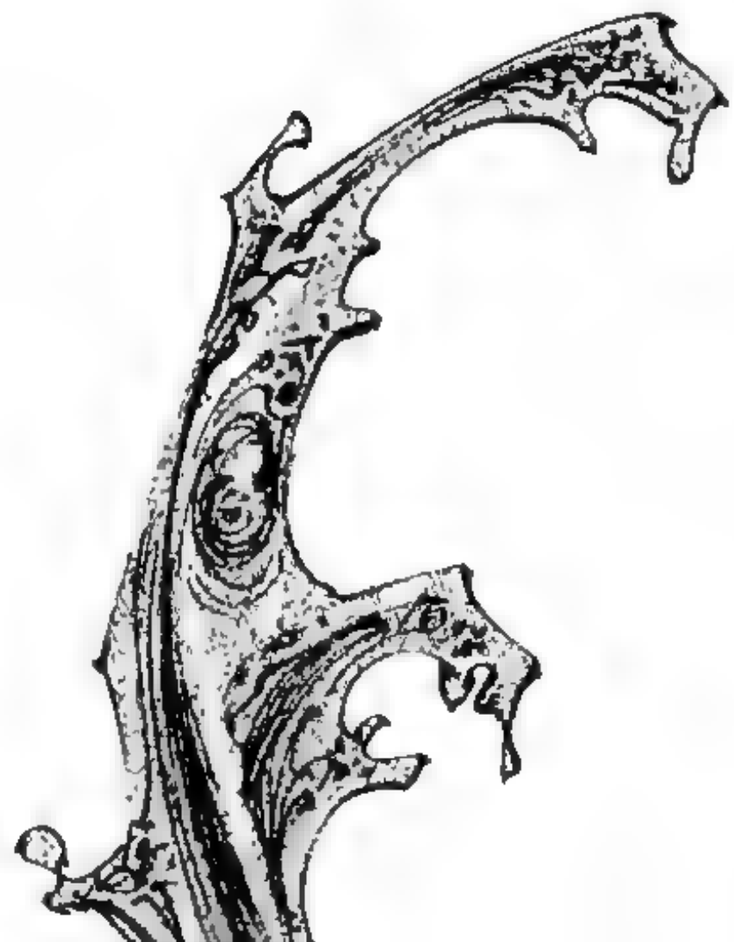
SUCH PASSION...

THE DESIRE TO BE RECOGNIZED...

...AND RESPECTED BY YOUR OPPONENT.

HUNGER FOR PRAISE...

IT'S NOT EASY TO KEEP UNDER CONTROL.

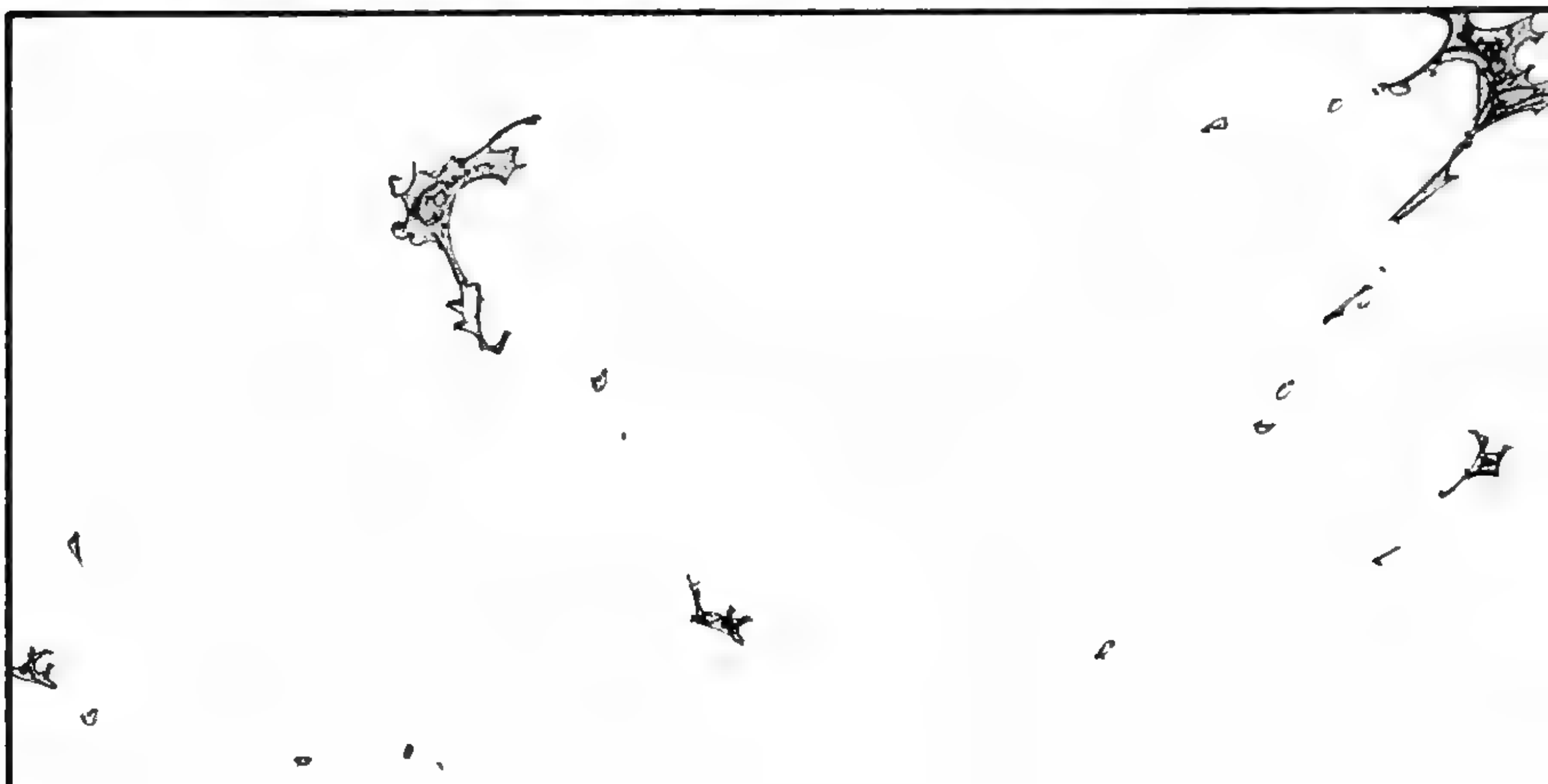


AN OBSESSION THAT RISES UP LIKE A WAVE WITHIN THE SOUL.

I SUPPOSE THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE FEELING RIGHT NOW, EH?

OLD MAN...

HYUU



INVINCIBILITY IS A MIRAGE.

JUST A WORD.

AT SOME POINT I HAD FORGOTTEN...
...JUST WHAT IT WAS I HAD BEEN SEEKING OUT. AND COMPARED TO THAT...
BEING STRONGER THAN ANYONE...
THAT DIDN'T MATTER TO ME ANYMORE.

PTU

HA HA HA!
YOU TALK LIKE SEKISHŪSAI.

YOU DISAPPOINT ME, YOU LIAR!

YOU GET ZERO POINTS.
ZWRR
ZWSH

FWAP
NO WAY!
ZERO POINTS

THWAK

THWAK

KTUNK

OOF?

KRKL

KRAKL

THWK

...

#280

Sword Demon Ittōsai

THE LEGENDARY SWORD-MASTER.
THIS IS WHAT HE'D BE LIKE IF HE WERE ALIVE.
AMAZING.

#280
Sword Demon Ittōsai

THUNK
DEMON'S CHILD...
...
UNDER-ESTIMATED YOU...
...JUST A CHILD.
NGHH

I WON.

HUUU...

THAT'S MY THIRD.

(AT 13 DEFEATED ARIMA KIHEI; AT 14...)

YAHHH!

I'VE STILL GOT A WAYS TO GO...

SWAK
UNGH
HMF
THWAK

HUF

HUF

HUF

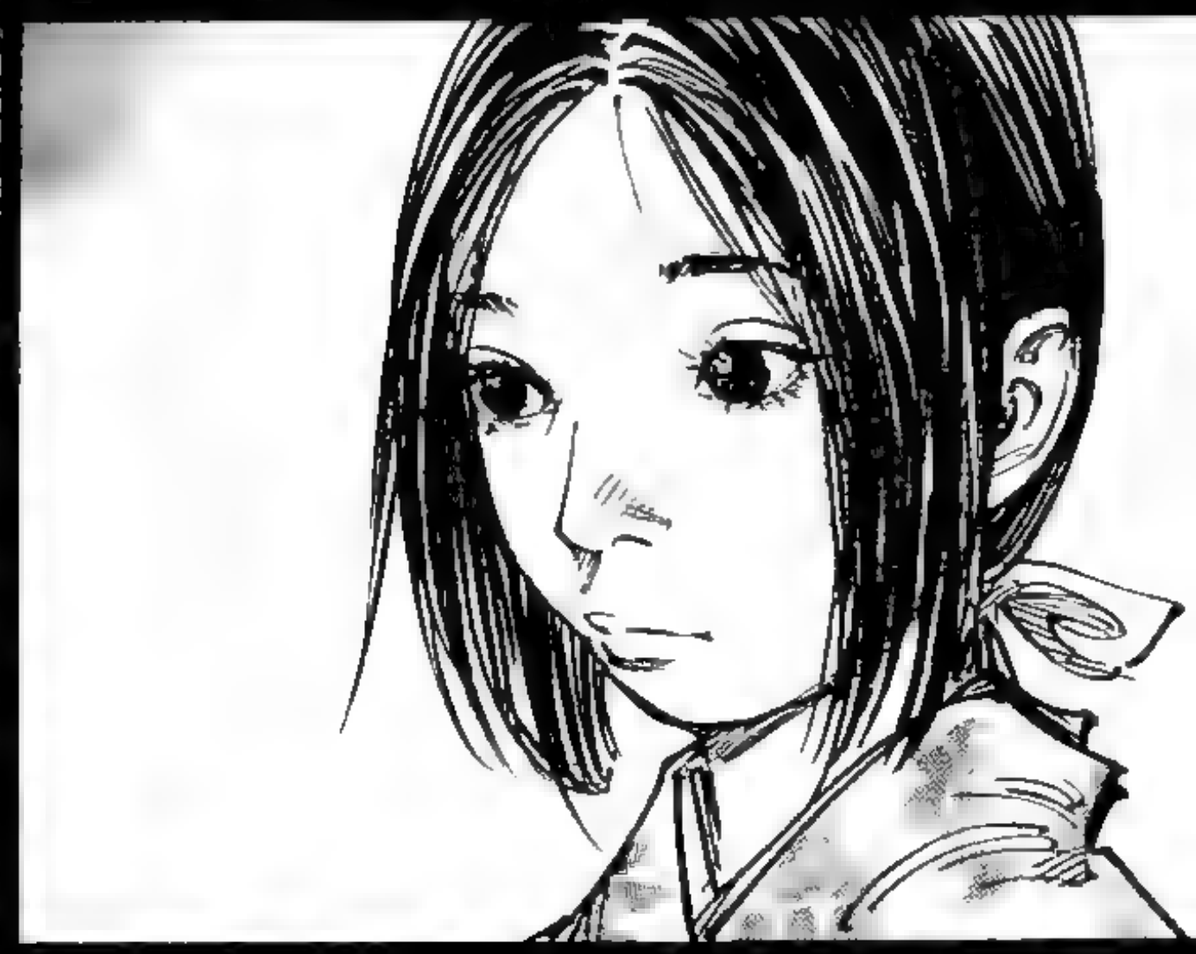
HOW'S THAT?

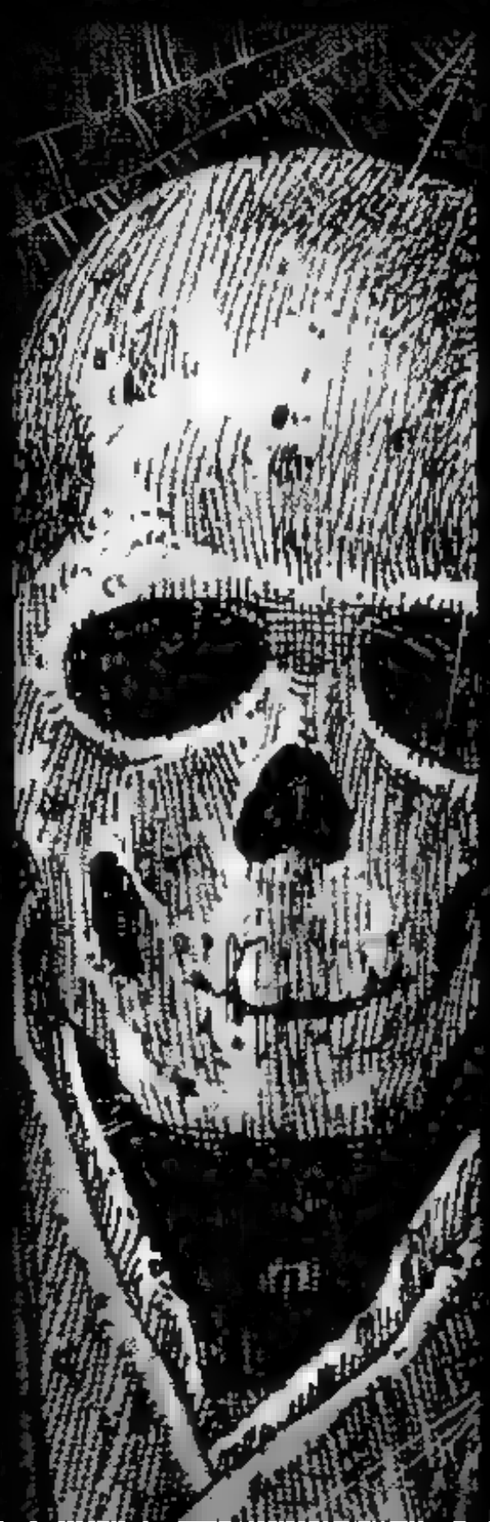
I'M FINE.

IT'S NOTHING.

THEY'RE ALL NOBODIES.

OOPS.





I HAD TEN MATCHES AND CUT DOWN ALL TEN.

I DESERVE SOME PRAISE, HUH?

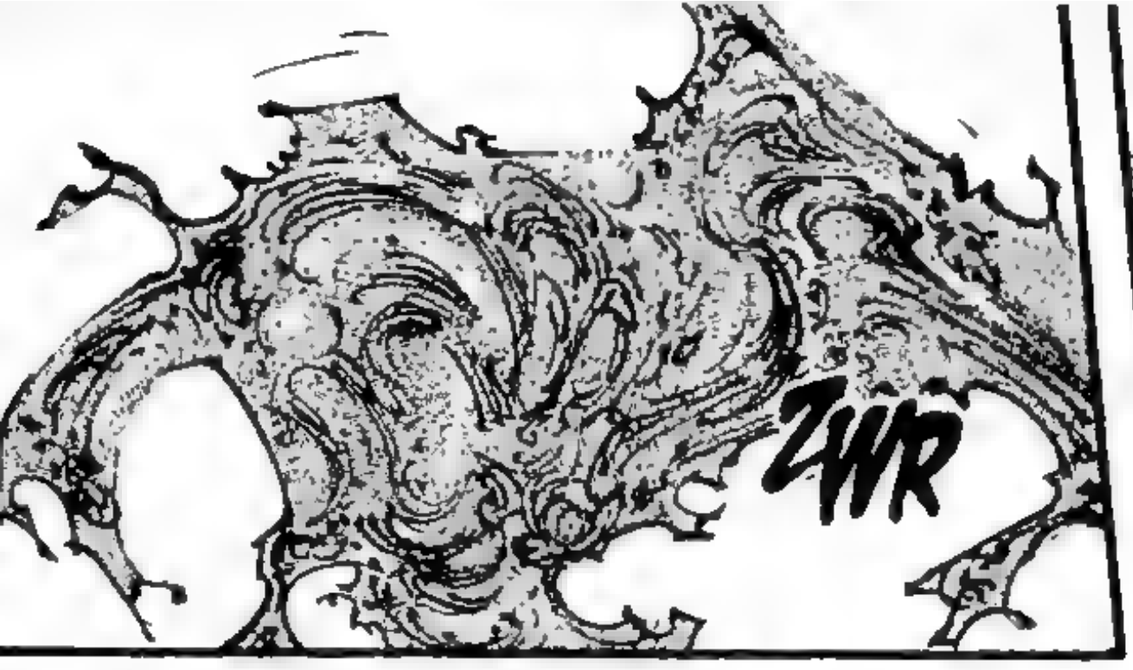
SWORD DEMON ITTŌSAI.

GIVE ME YOUR PRAISE.

SWORD DEMON ITTŌSAI...

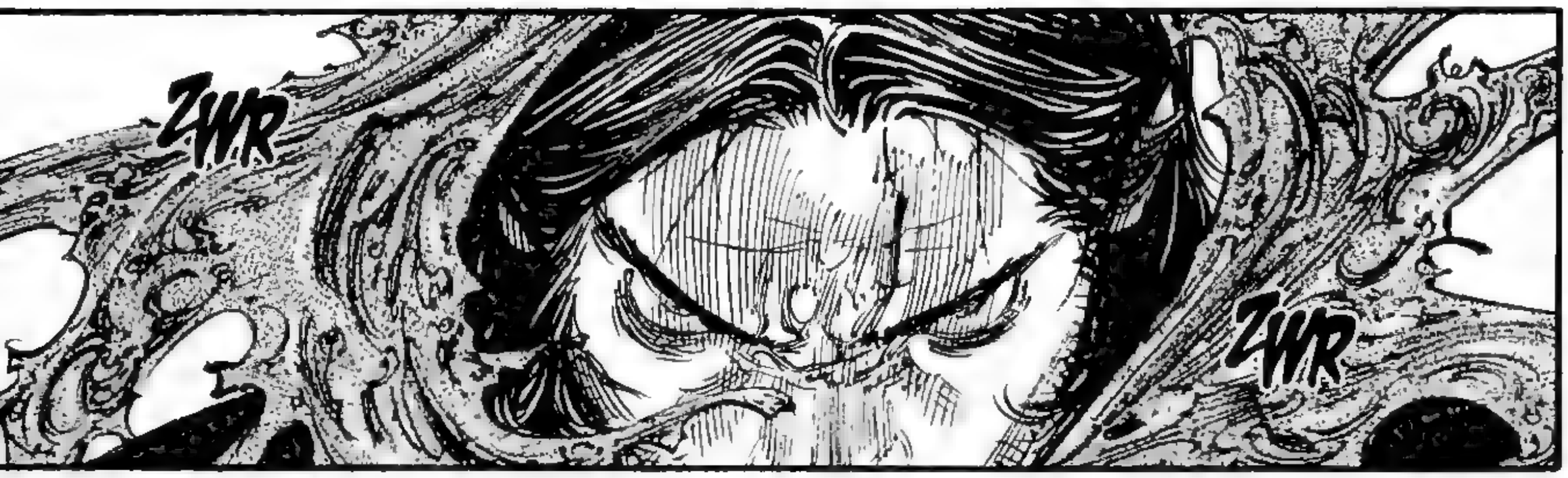
SWORD
DEMON
ITTŌSAI...

YOU DISAPPOINT ME.
YOU LIAR.
ZW
RR


ZWR

LIAR?
WHAT DID I LIE ABOUT?

...


ZWR
ZWR

BUT I DID IT.

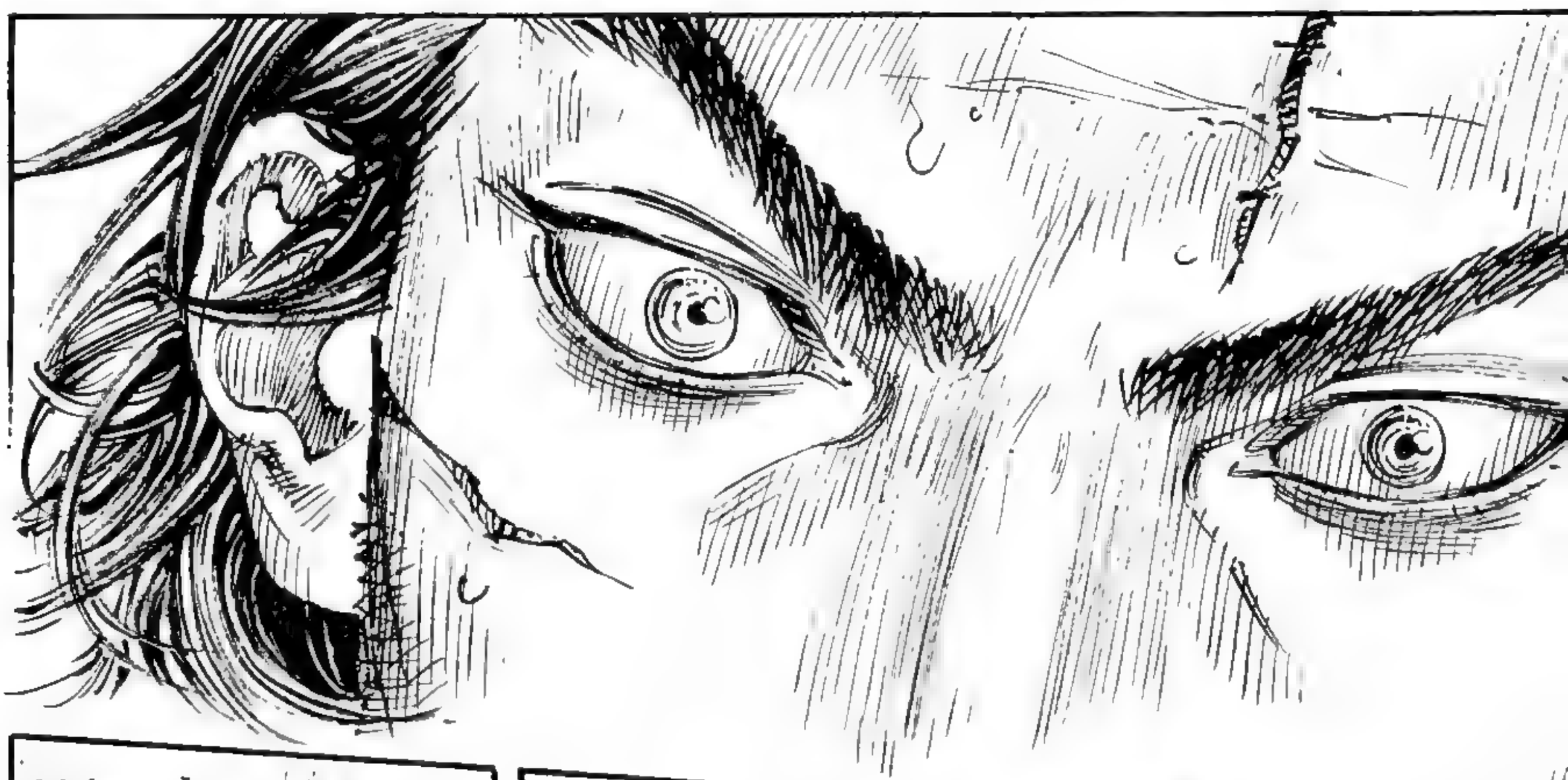
BUT CAN HE TAKE ON SEVENTY MEN?
HE CANNOT.
HE MAY BE ITTŌSAI...

I'LL MAKE HIM RESPECT ME.
ZWR
ME!
ZWR

I AM...
ZHR
...INVINCIBLE UNDER THE SUN.
ZHR

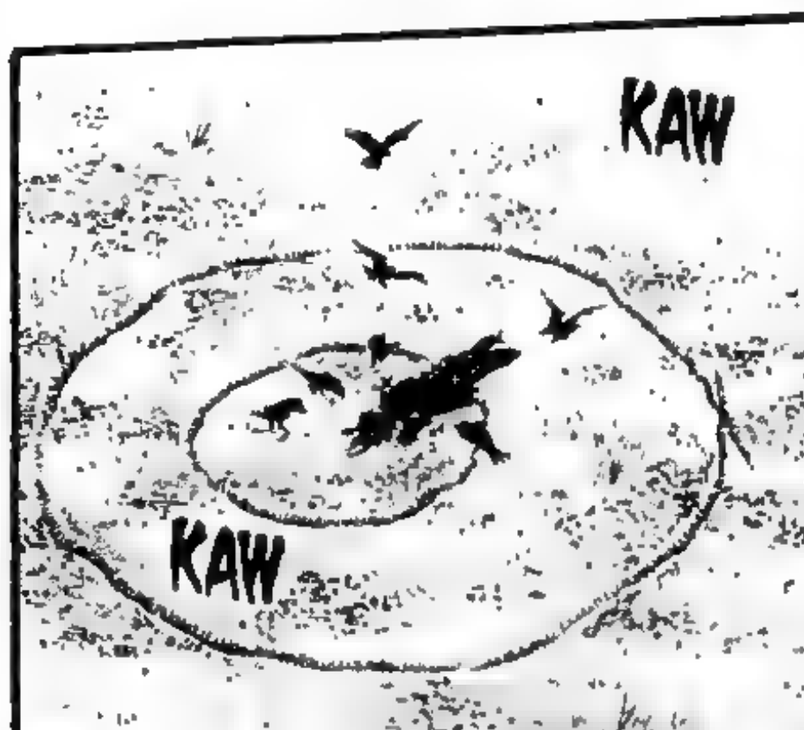
I'LL KILL YOU...
ZIIR

I'LL KILL YOU...
ZHR
ZHR
ZHR
I AM...
...INVINCIBLE UNDER THE SUN.



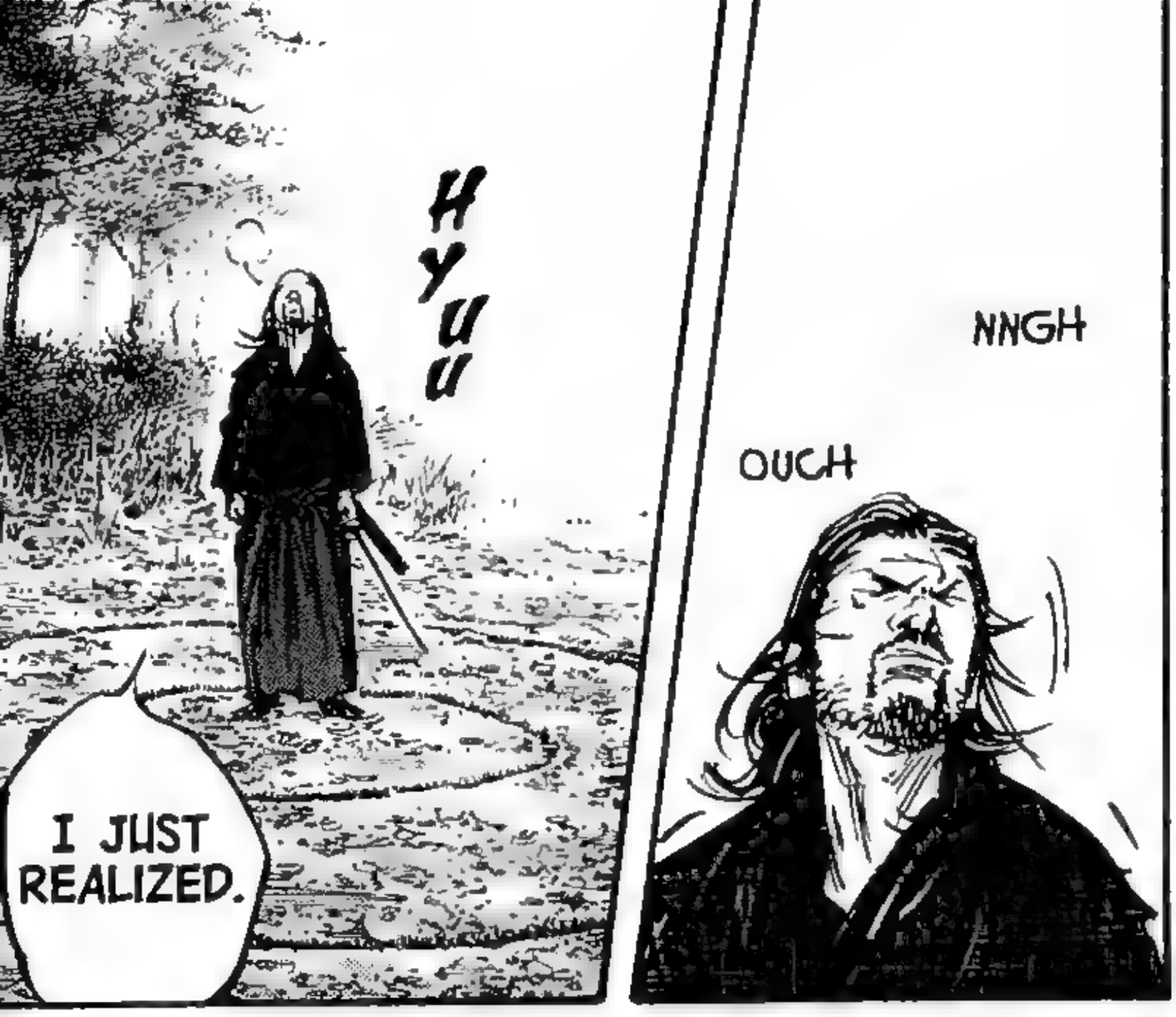
FWSSH
URR

KRRSH
I'M STRONG. I'M INVINCIBLE!
YAHH!


KAW
KAW

FWP
ZWSH

IT'S BEEN AN HONOR TO MEET YOU.
ITŌ ITTŌSAI...


HYUU
I JUST REALIZED.
OUCH
NNGH

WHAT?

I HAVE NO REASON TO FIGHT.

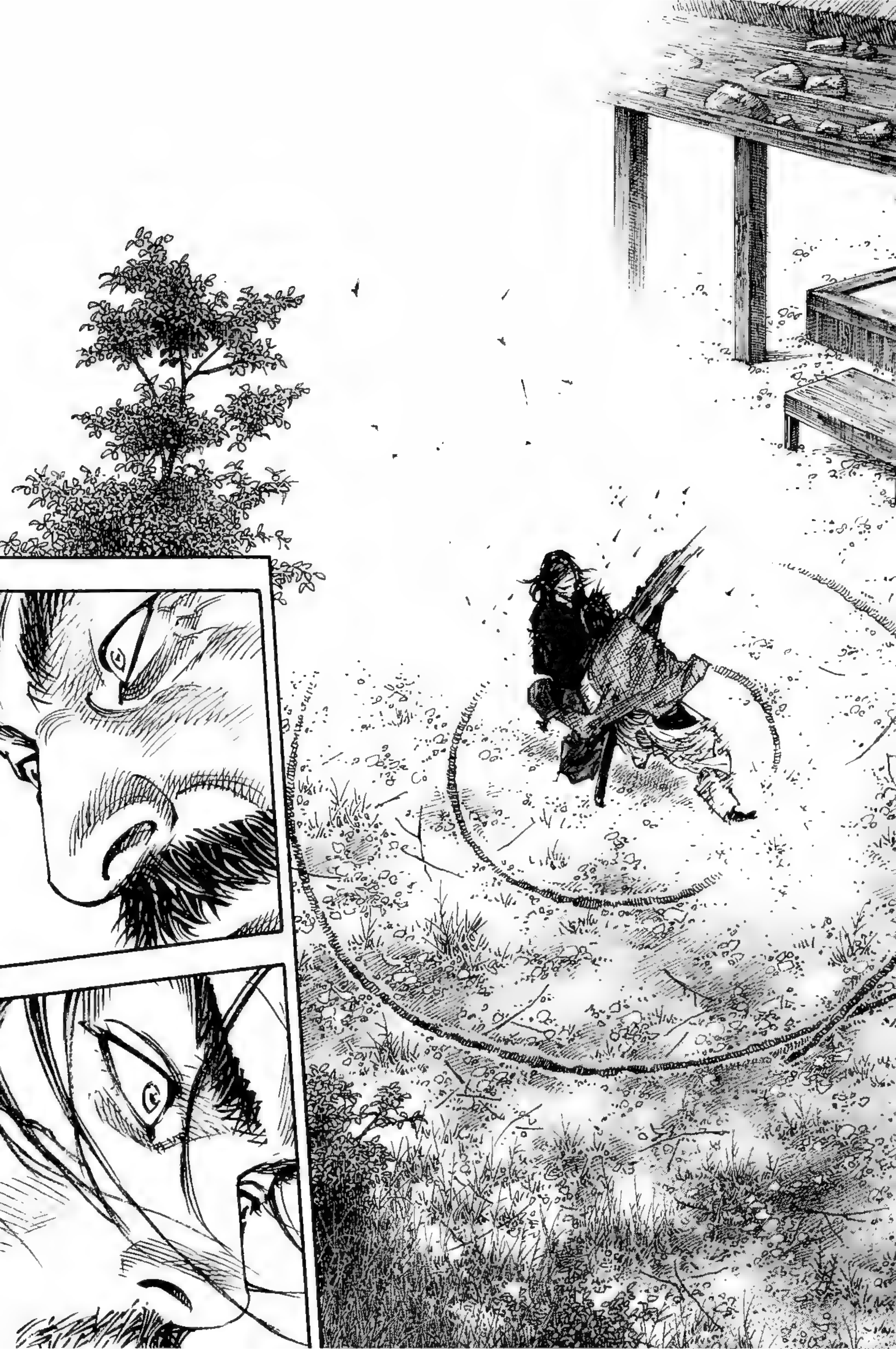
...IT WOULD BE SUCH A WASTE.
TO FIGHT YOU FEELING LIKE THIS...
...

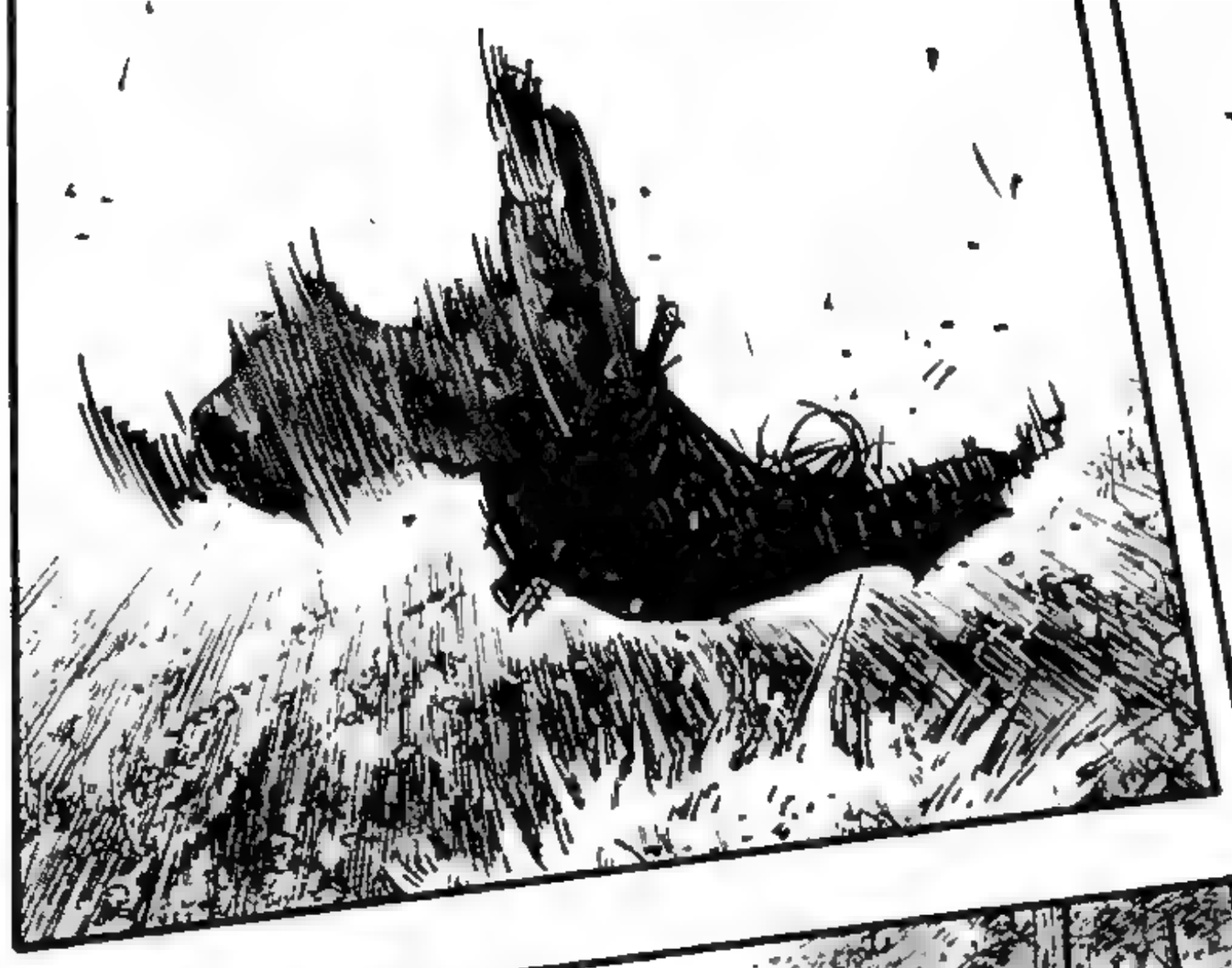
FICH

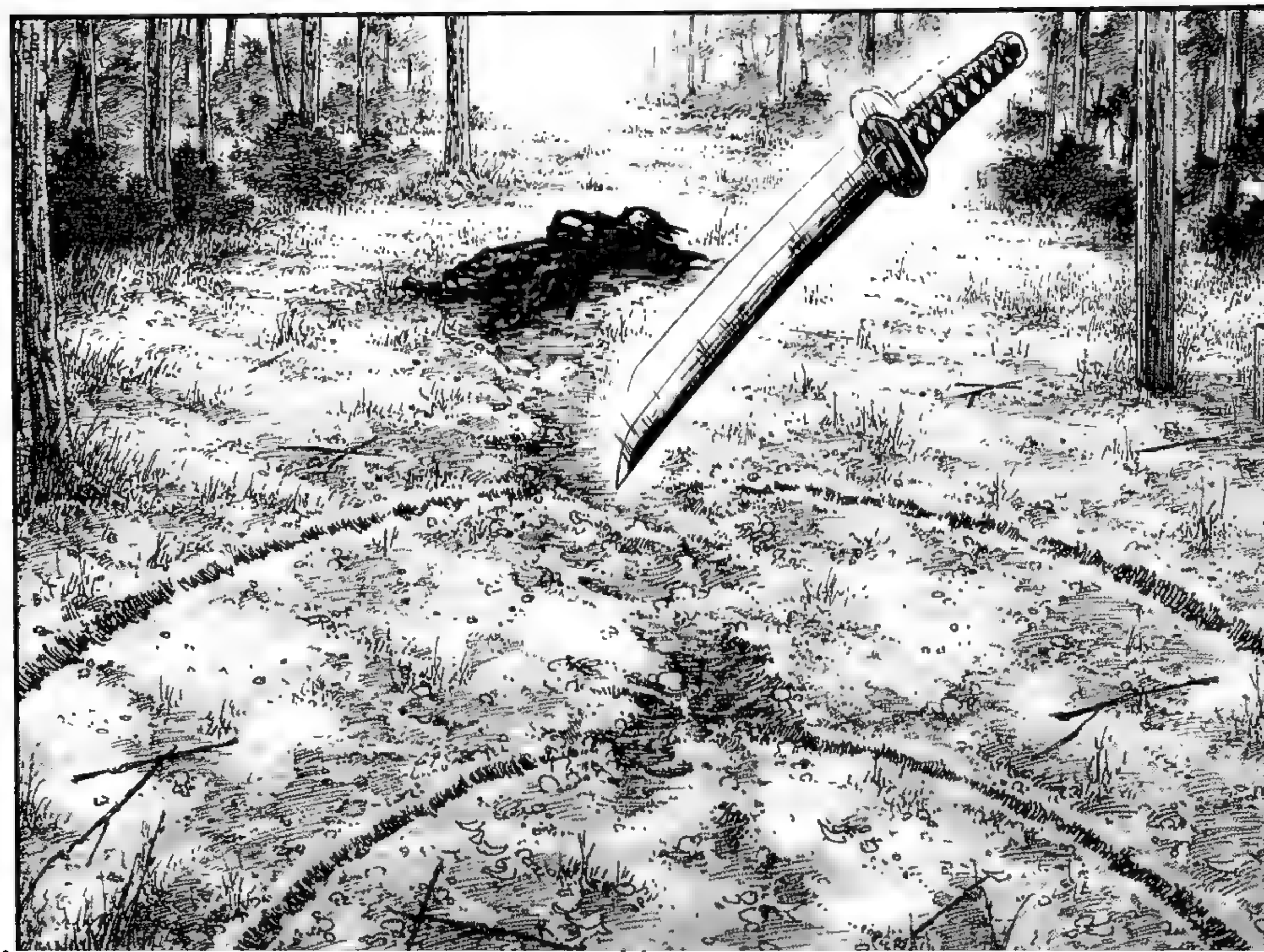
...
FICH

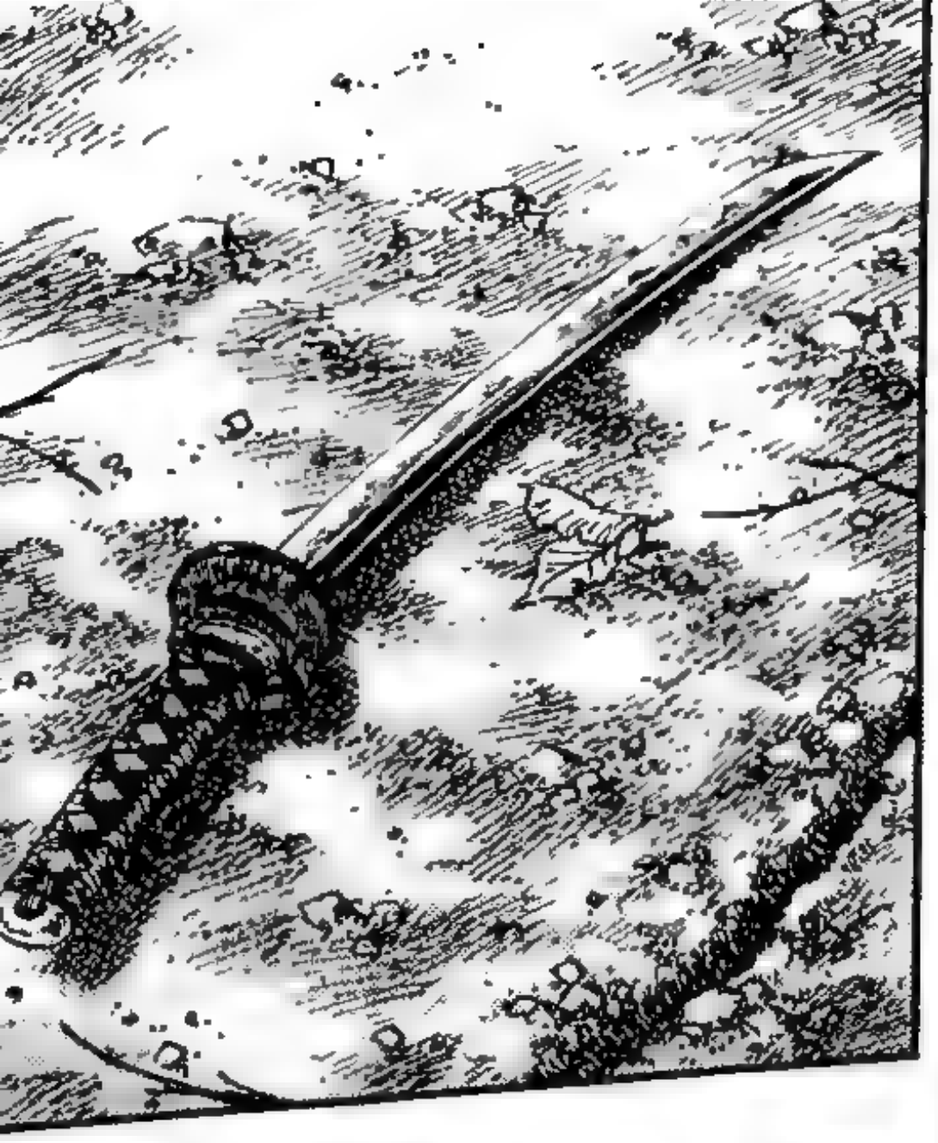
WHUD

#281 | Falling Star







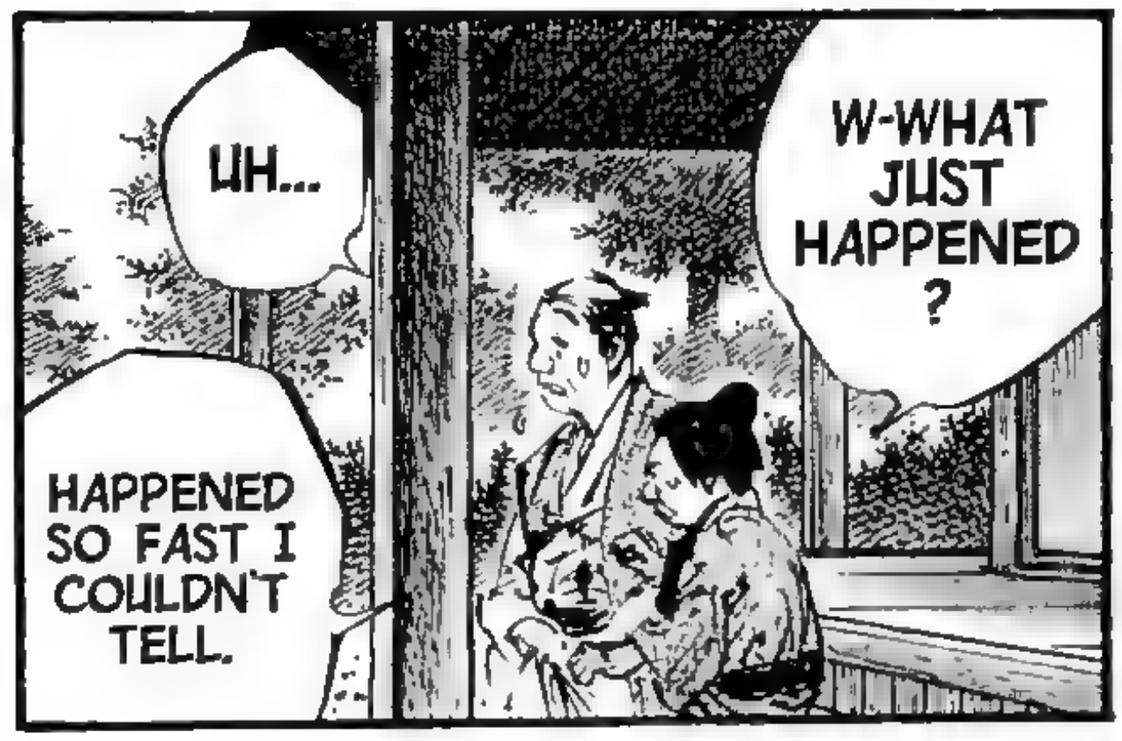


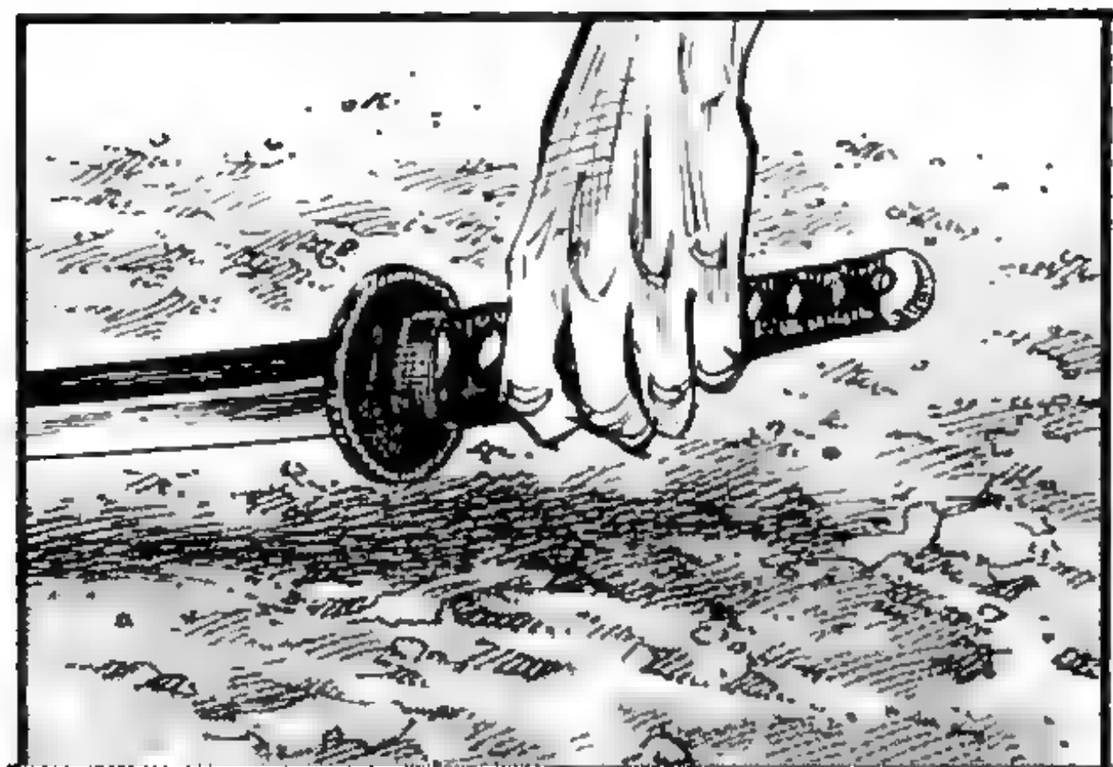
HUH?

DM
DM

HEH HEH...
HE GOT ONE IN.

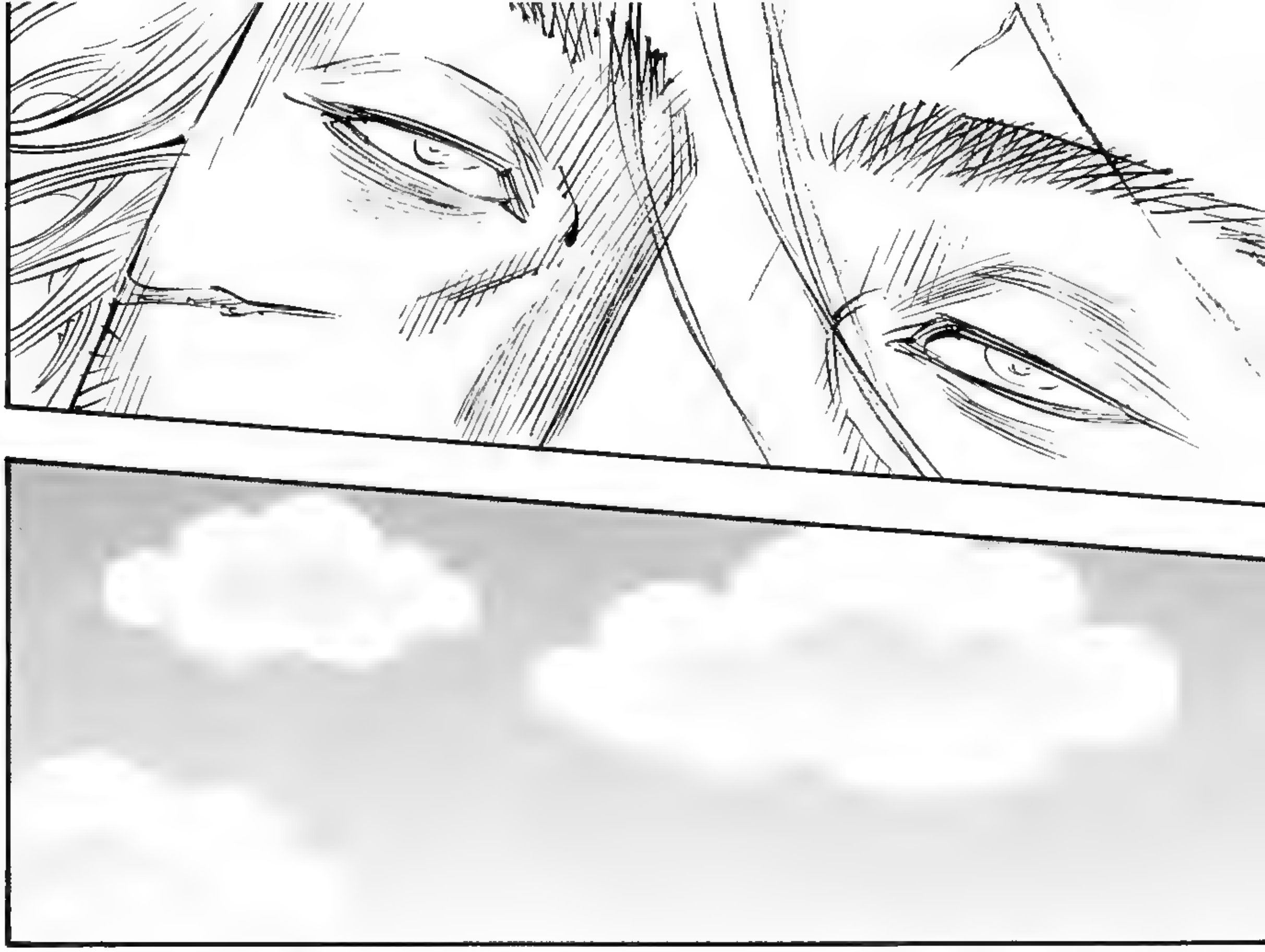
TUGG


UH...
HAPPENED SO FAST I COULDN'T TELL.
W-WHAT JUST HAPPENED ?



...

HOW MANY POINTS SHALL I GIVE YOU NOW?



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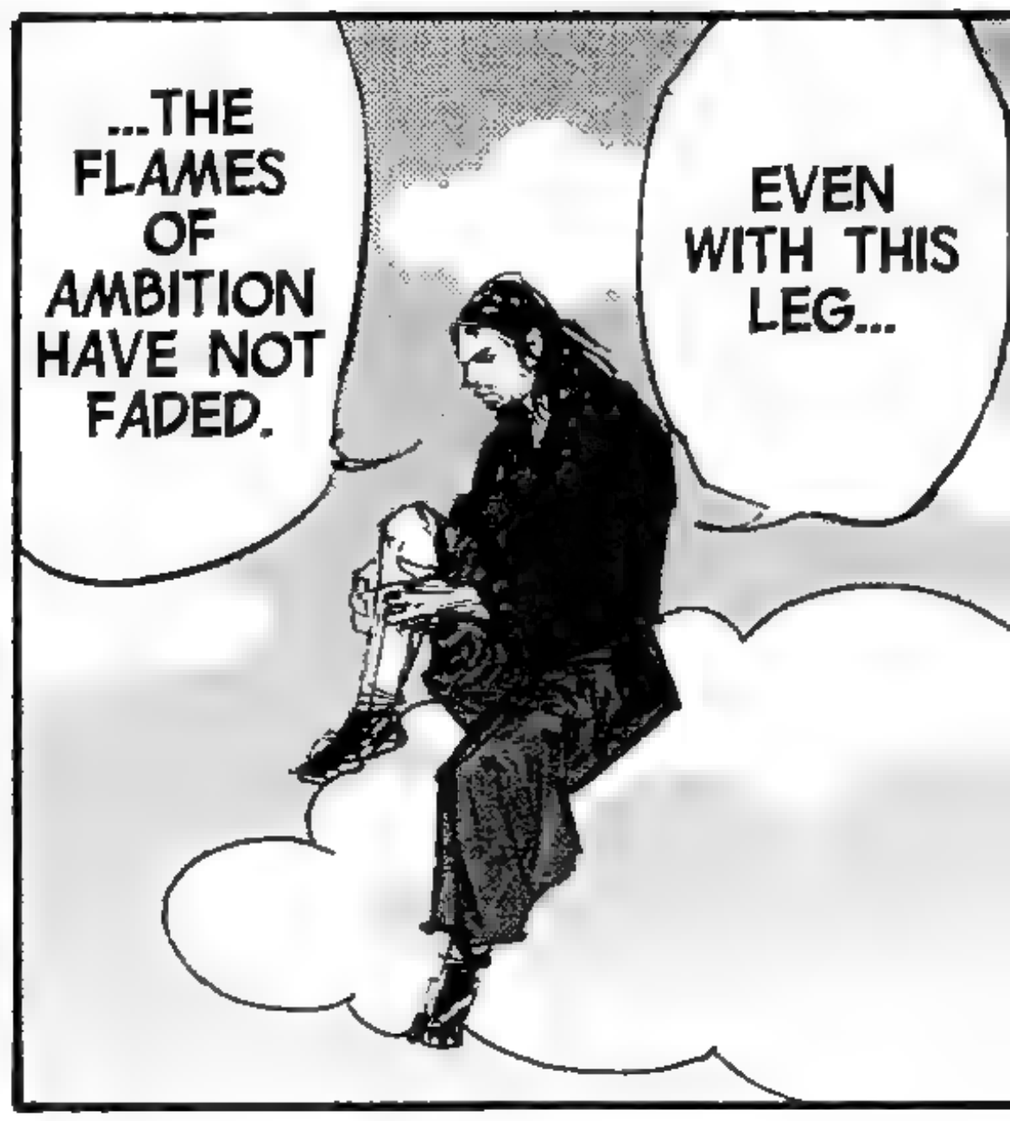
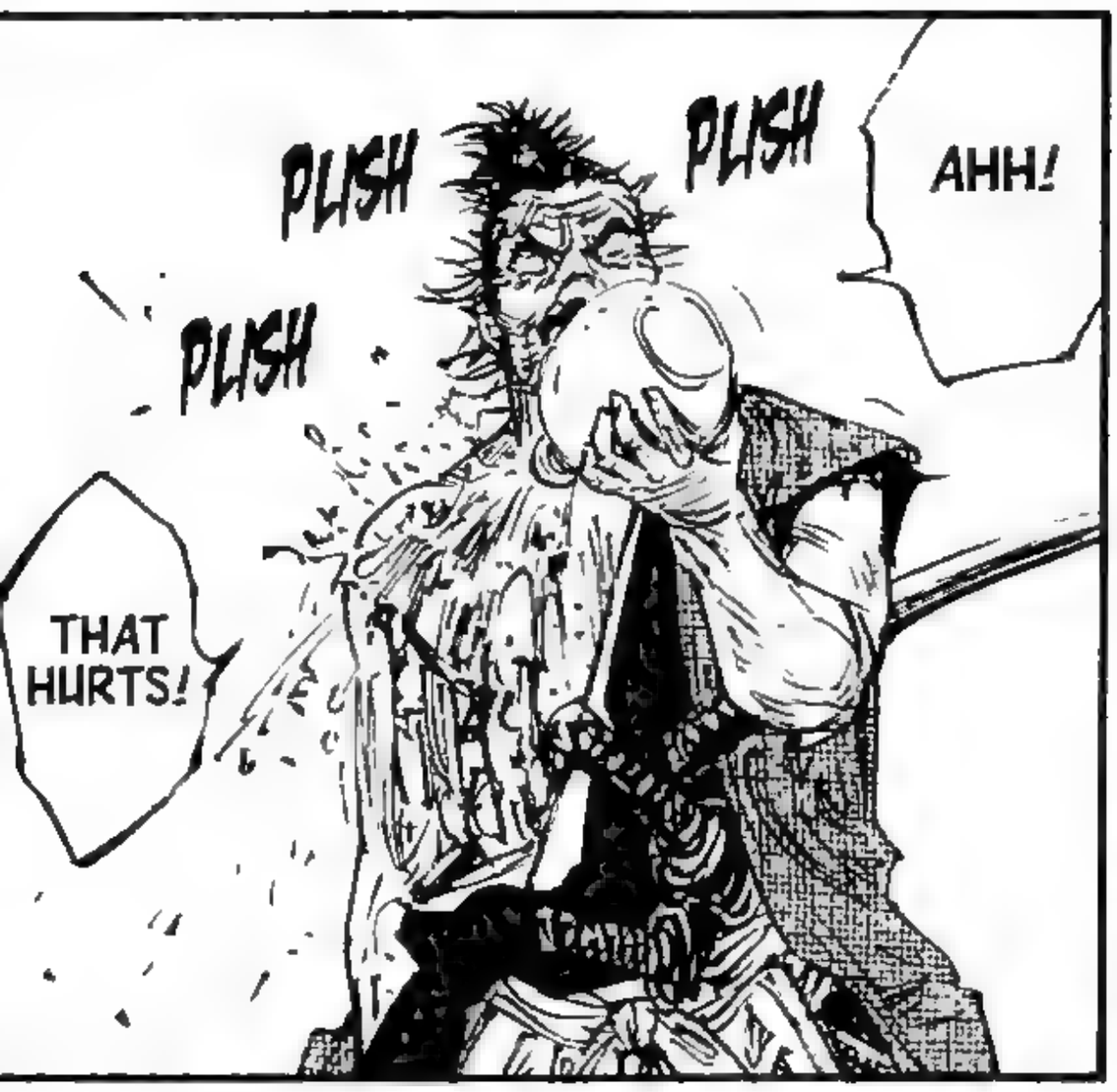

...THE FLAMES OF AMBITION HAVE NOT FADED.
EVEN WITH THIS LEG...

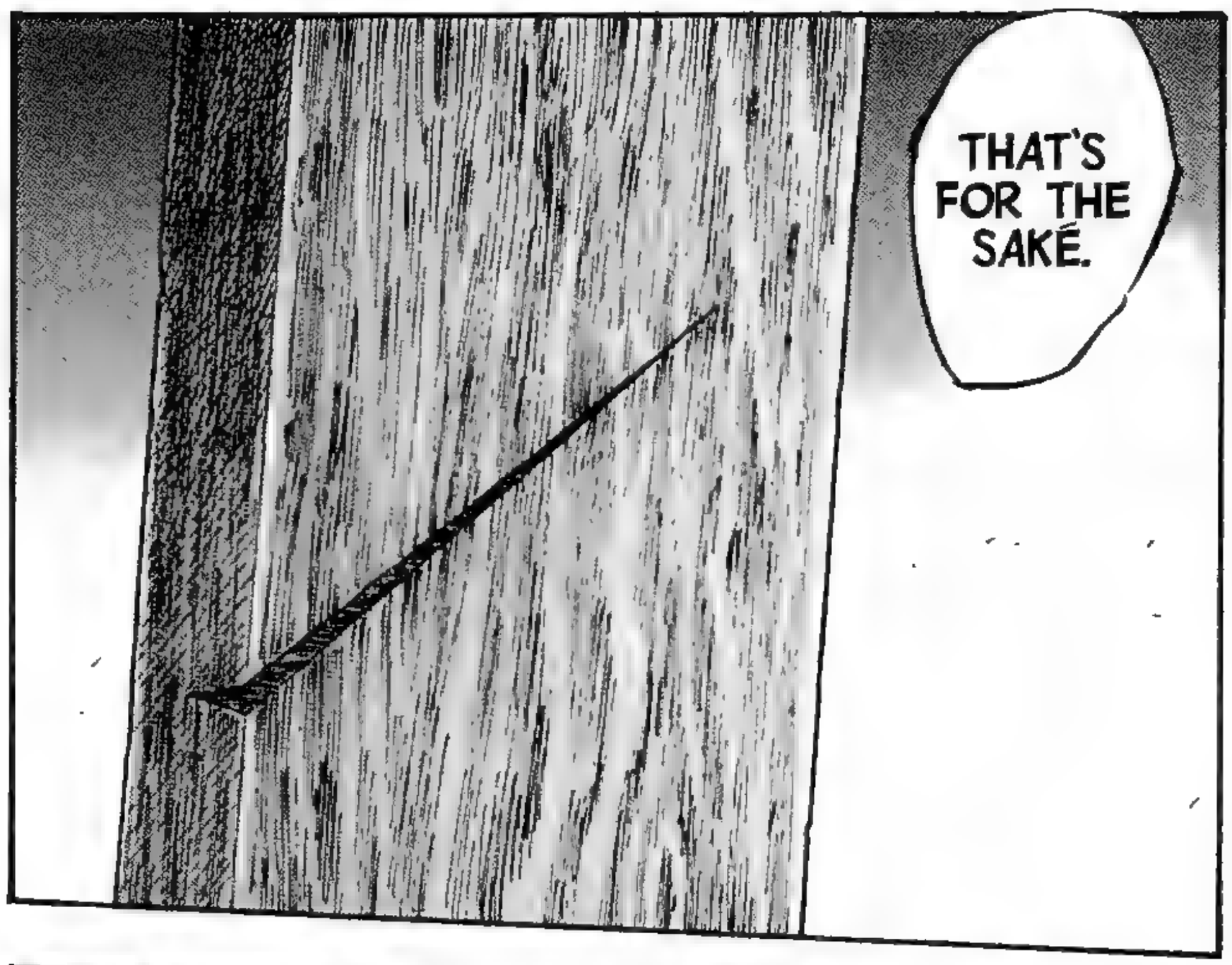
SUR-PRISING.

FICH
FICH


PLISH
PLISH
PLISH
AHH!
THAT HURTS!

HUH?
DO YOU HAVE ANY SAKÉ?
Y-YES, SIR!

!!
TRAVAK


THAT'S FOR THE SAKÉ.

HUH?

FICH
YOU'LL HAVE PLENTY OF GUESTS COMING NOW. DOWN THROUGH TO YOUR GRANDCHILDREN'S GENERATION.
FICH
FICH

I THOUGHT I UNDERSTOOD THAT MUCH. YET I LOST SIGHT OF THAT...

INVINCIBILITY IS JUST A MIRAGE.

ZWSHH

I AM...

...INVINCIBLE!

ZWRR

THAT'S NOT WHAT I WAS TRULY AFTER...

IT'S DIFFERENT.

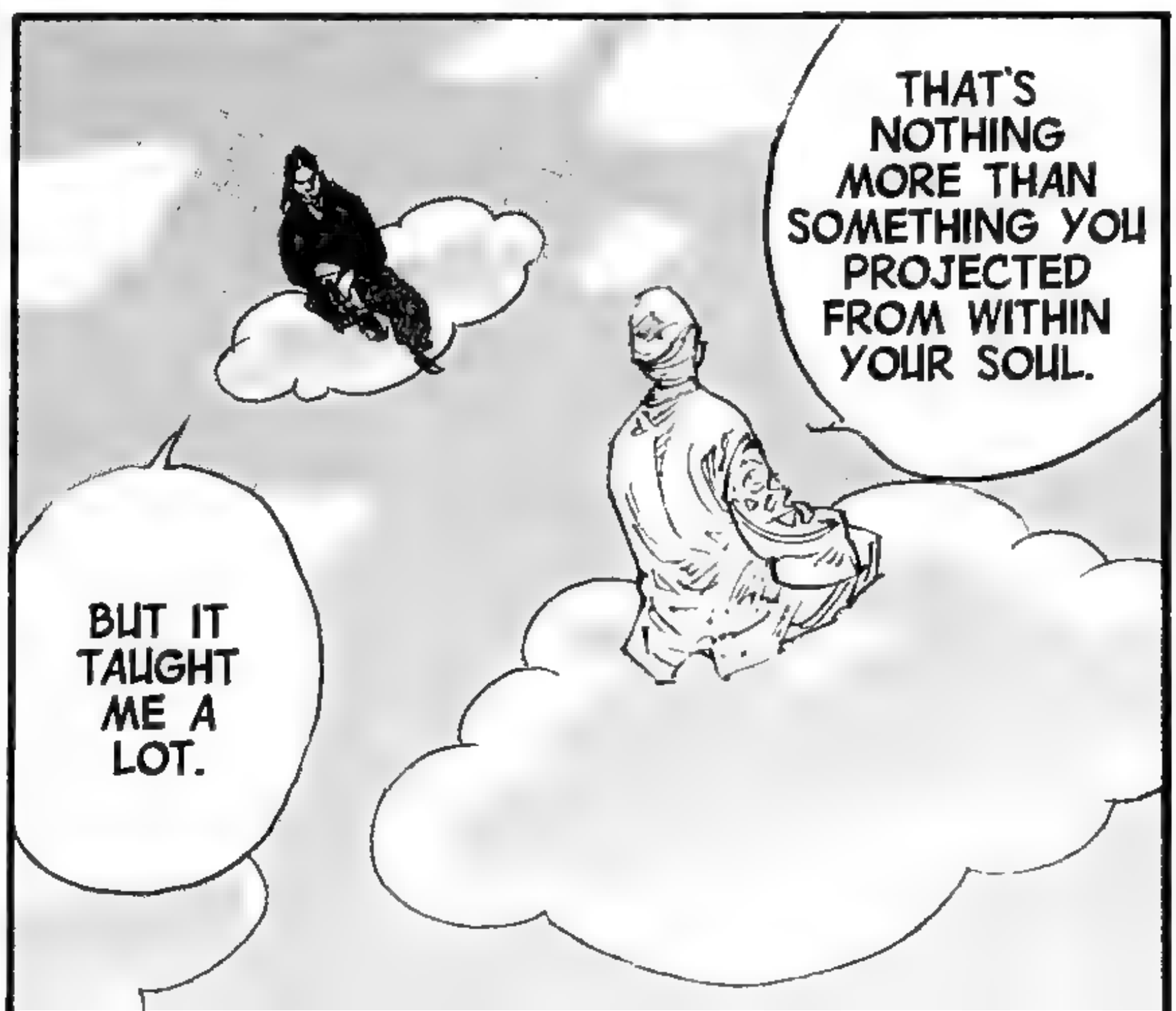
BUT BECAUSE OF THIS AT LEAST I KNOW NOW.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
SAY...
YOU HAVEN'T COME AROUND LATELY.

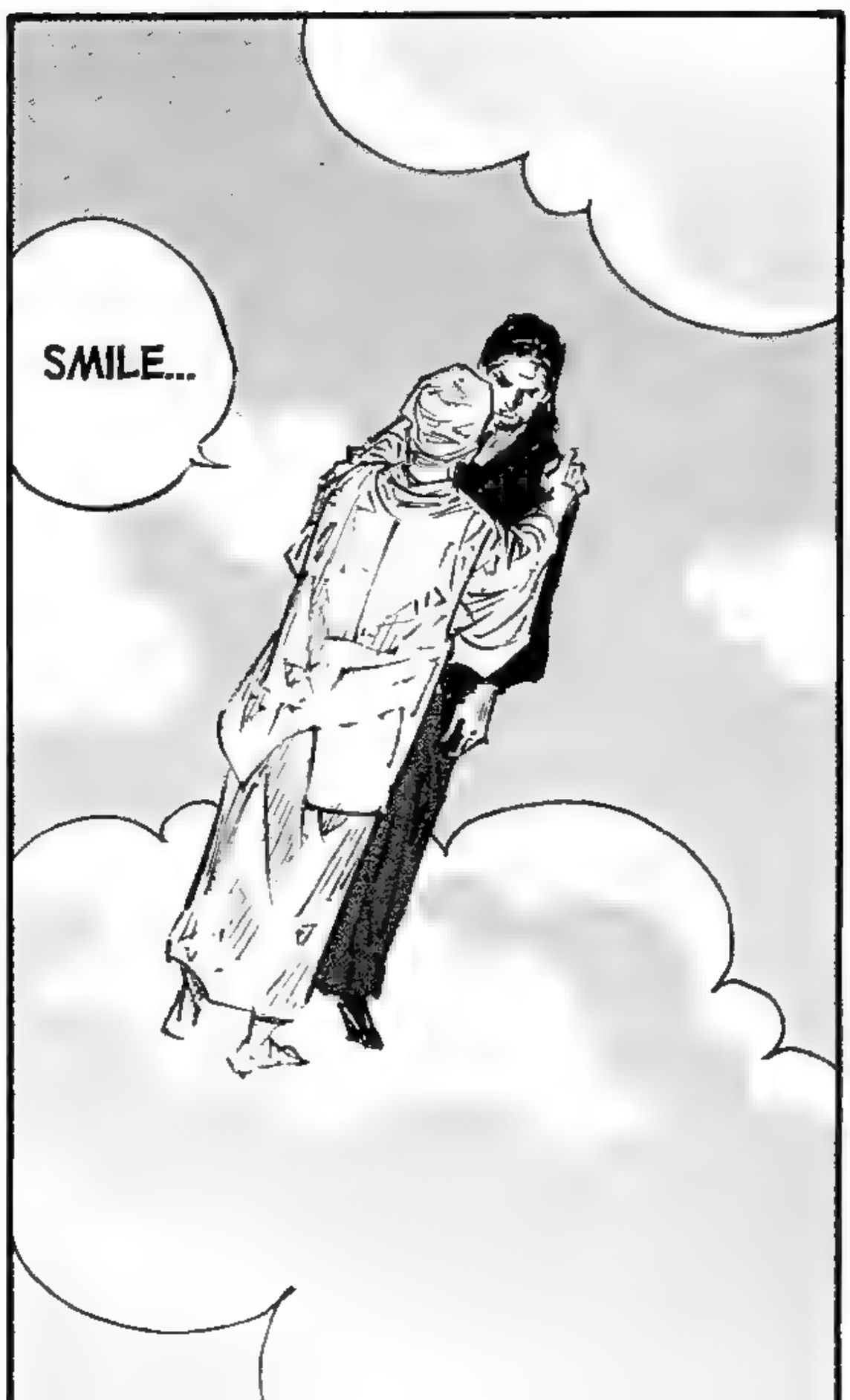
I DON'T KNOW.

HRMPH.

HMM...
WELL THEN SURELY...

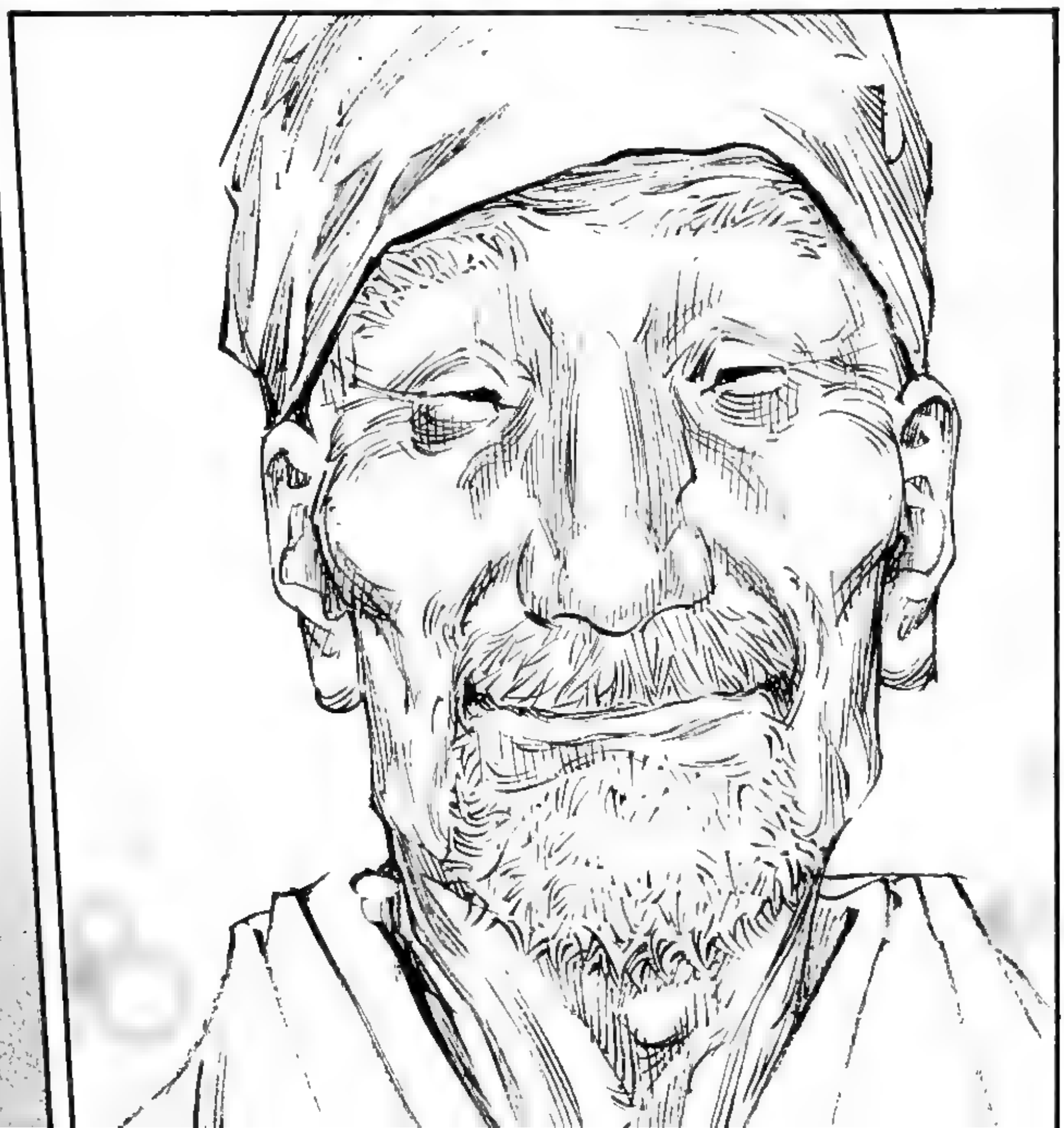

THAT'S NOTHING MORE THAN SOMETHING YOU PROJECTED FROM WITHIN YOUR SOUL.
BUT IT TAUGHT ME A LOT.

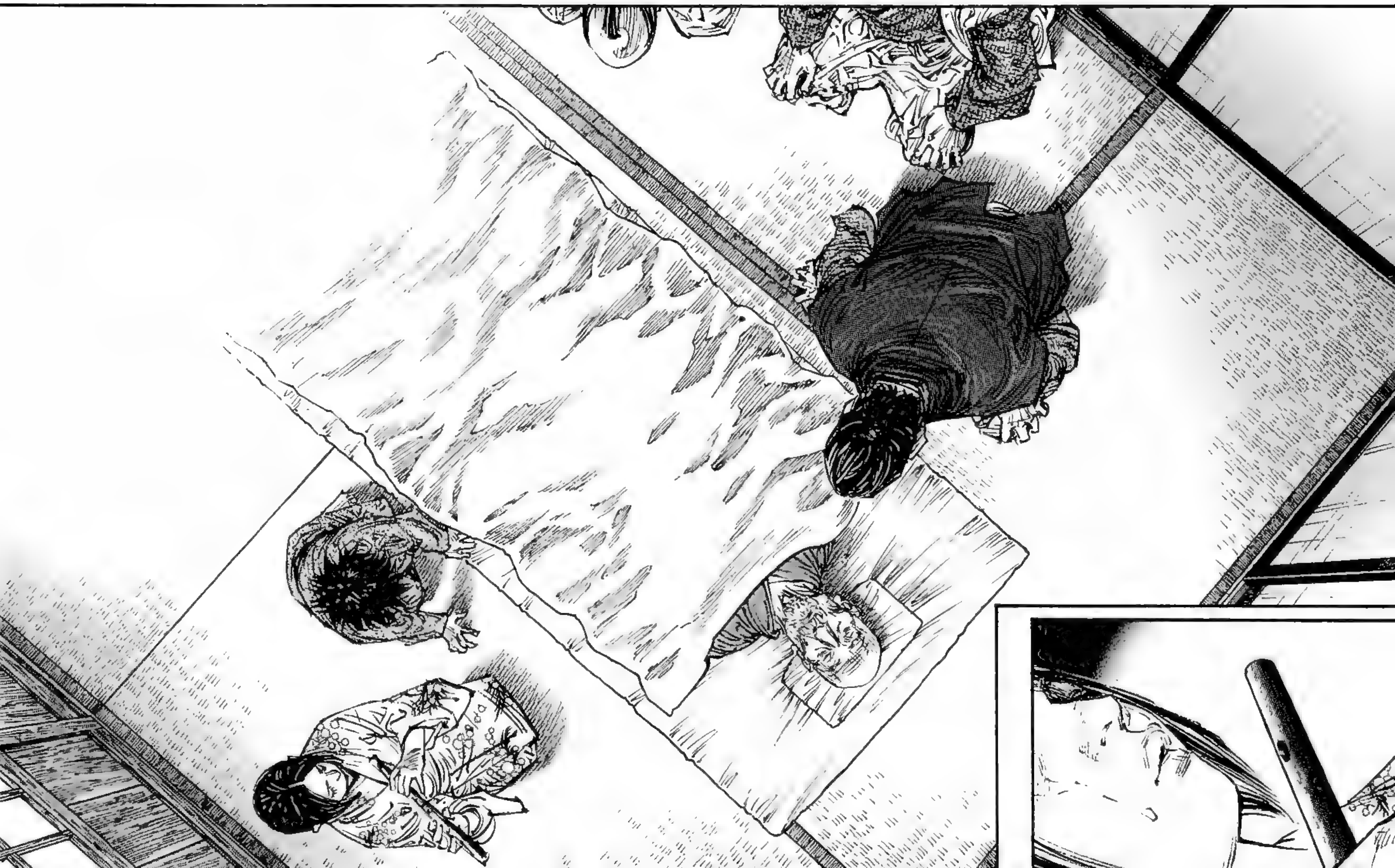
...THE ANSWER MUST BE INSIDE OF YOU.



YOU SHOULD SMILE MORE.

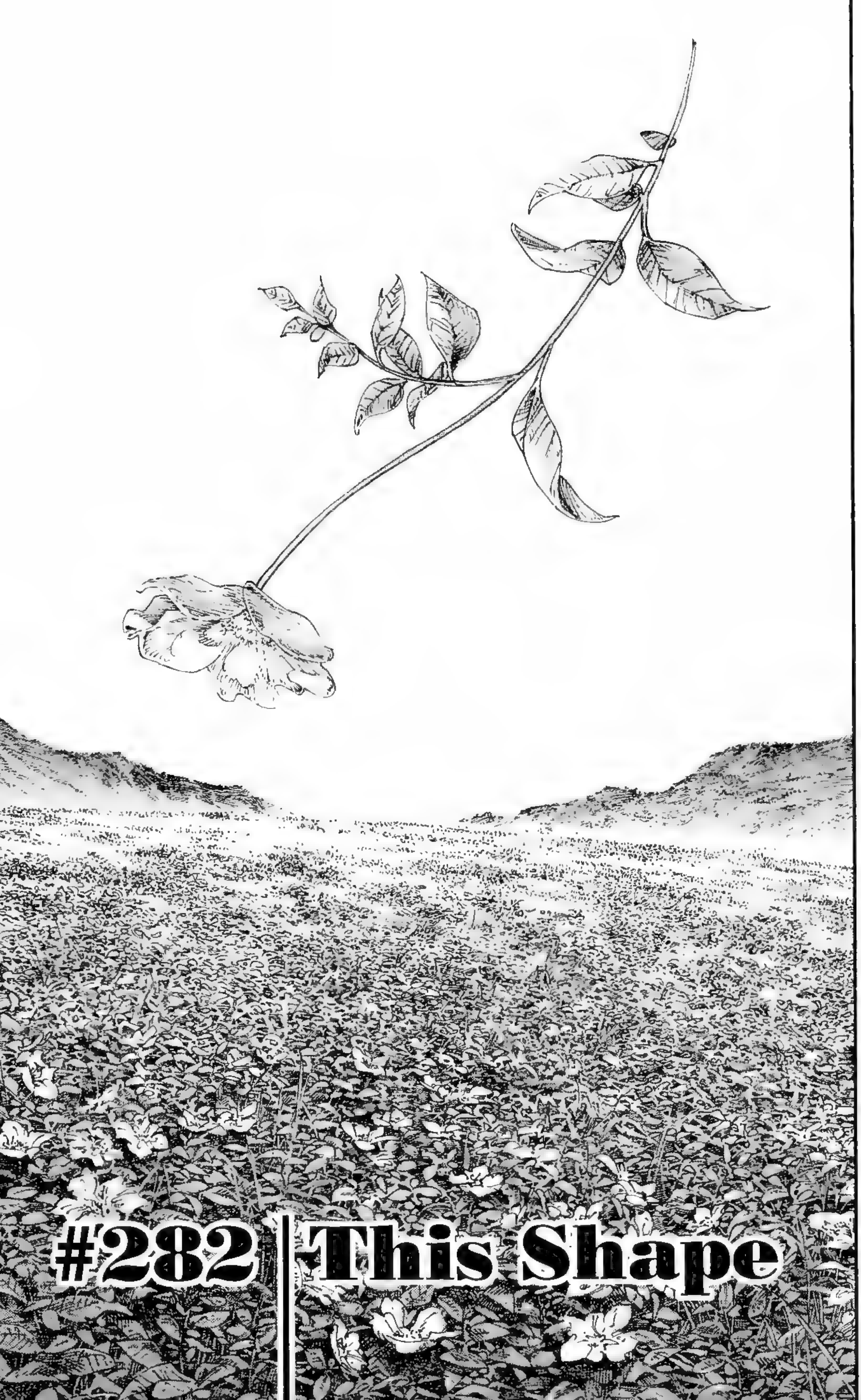
UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN...



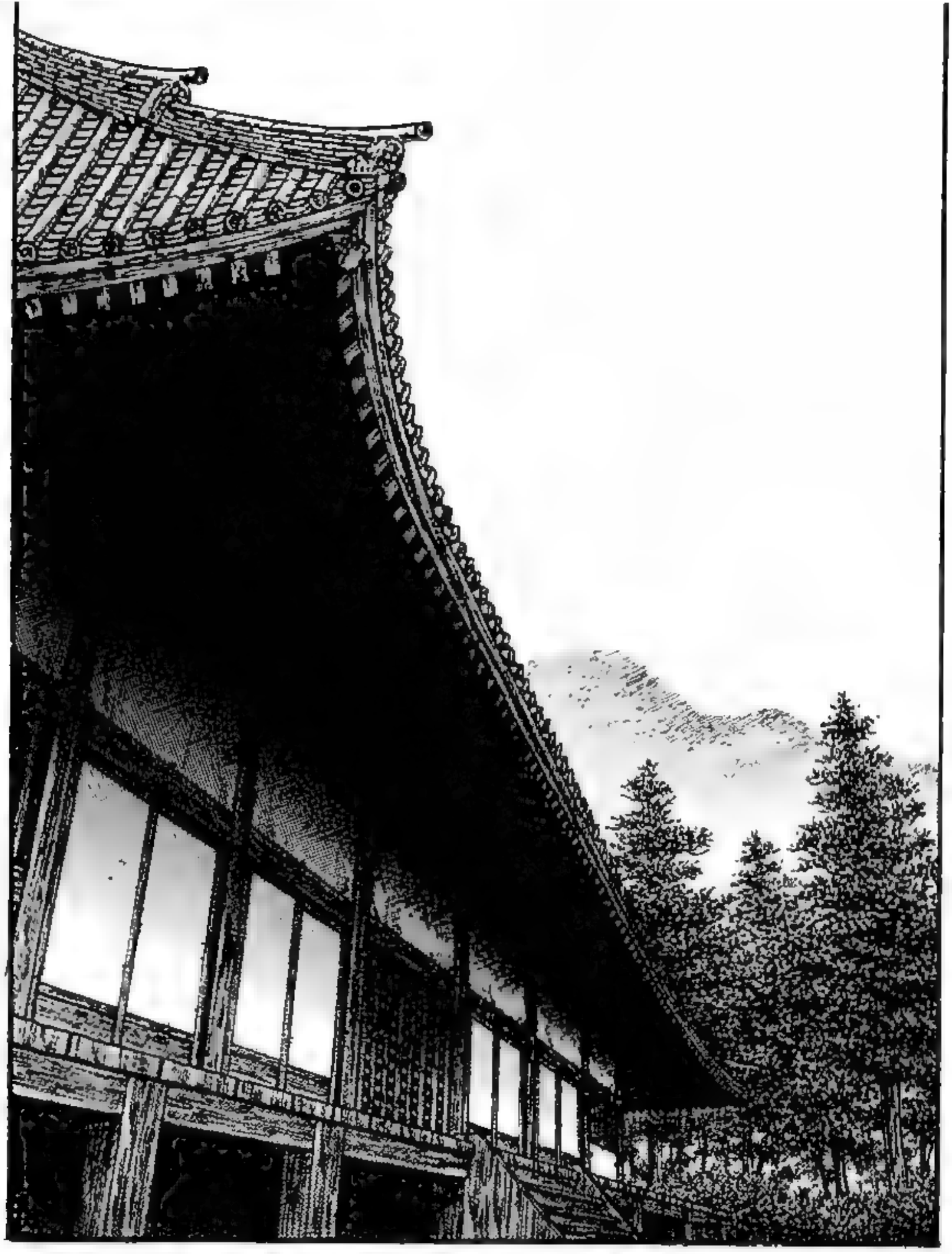


LORD YAGYŪ.

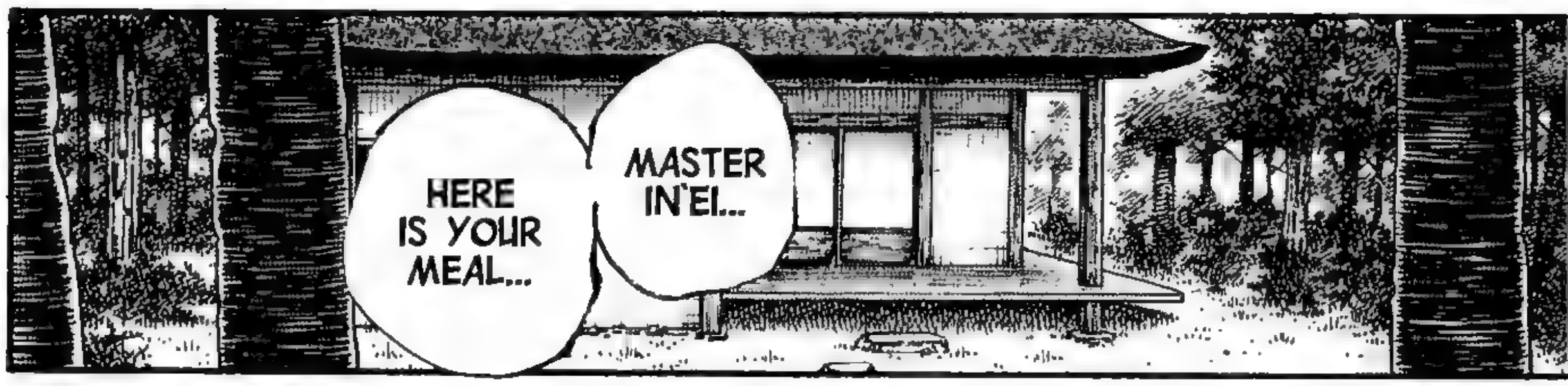
FAREWELL...

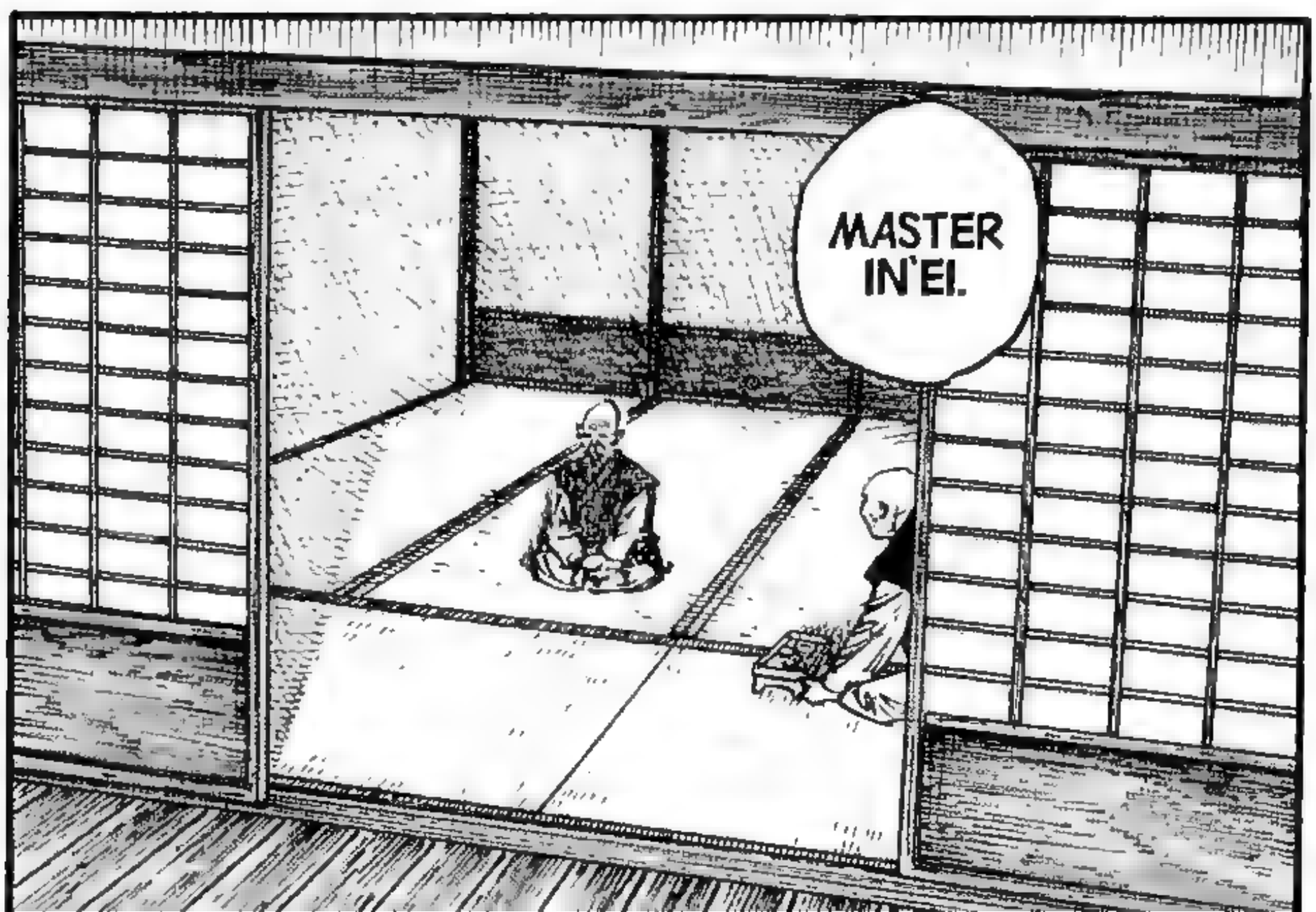


#282 This Shape



NARA...


HERE IS YOUR MEAL...
MASTER IN'EI...


MASTER IN'EI.

PLEASE ...
YOU MUST EAT SOME-THING.

HE REFUSES TO EAT.

...

I SEE HIM SMILING OCCASIONALLY THOUGH.
WHAT?

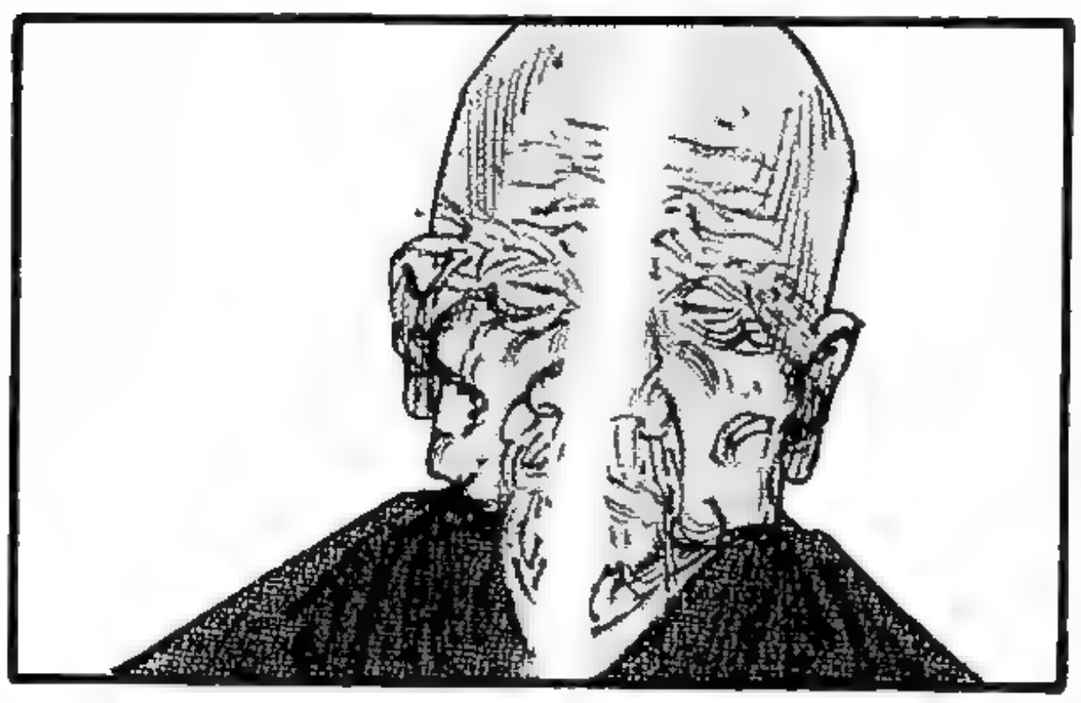
HE'S JUST GOING TO WASTE AWAY.
BUT HE'S FOCUSED ON MEDITATING.
HE'LL DRINK A LITTLE WATER.

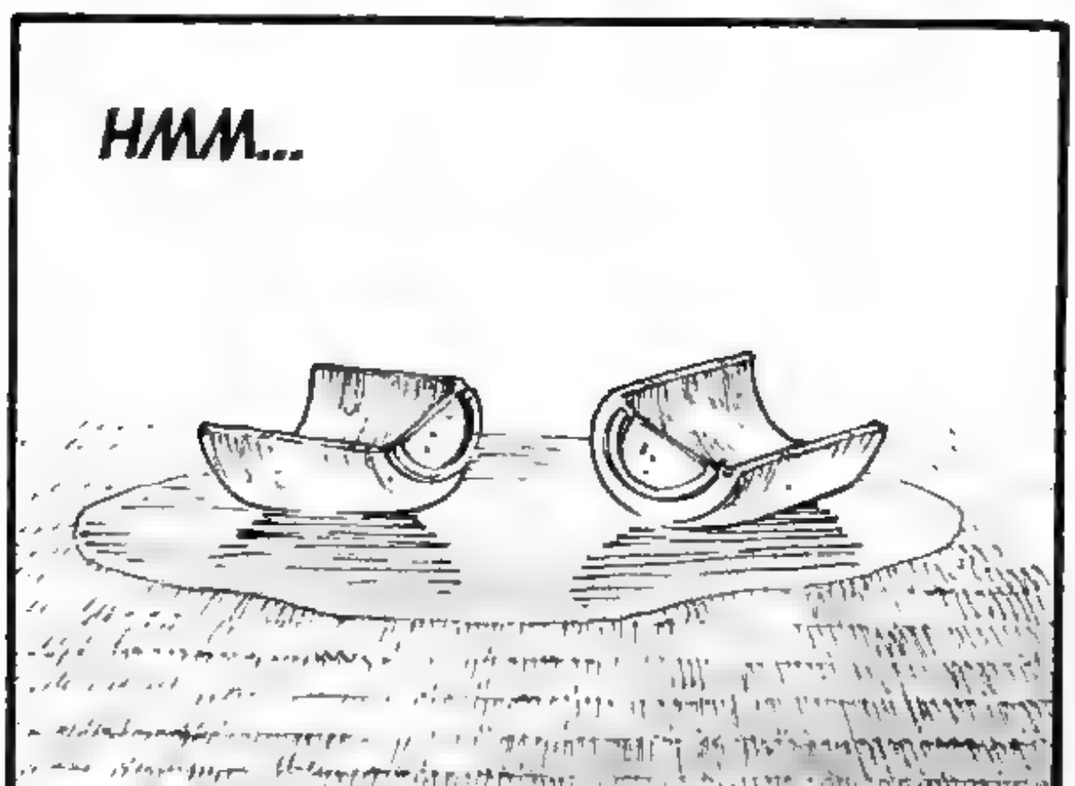
ALL I CAN DO NOW...
I CANNOT VENTURE TO APPROACH HIS STATE OF MIND.
I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT HE'S SEEING.

...IS WALK FORWARD ON MY OWN...

SO MY MASTER WILL HAVE NO REGRETS...

THAT'S ALL I CAN DO.





SO...
...YOU HAD TO GO BEFORE ME, EH?

ABOUT A YEAR LATER...

YAGYŪ SEKISHŪSAI MUNEYOSHI PASSED AWAY...

...AT THE AGE OF 79.

HŌZŌIN KAKUZENBŌ IN'EI DIES...

...AT THE AGE OF 86.

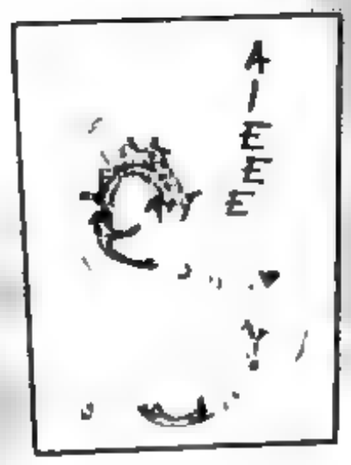
THAT WAS IT.

PATHETIC! PATHETIC! PATHETIC!

DAMN IT.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING, YOU FOOL!

THAT WAS GOOD.
EVEN WITH THIS LEG.

BUT THAT WAS GOOD THOUGH.



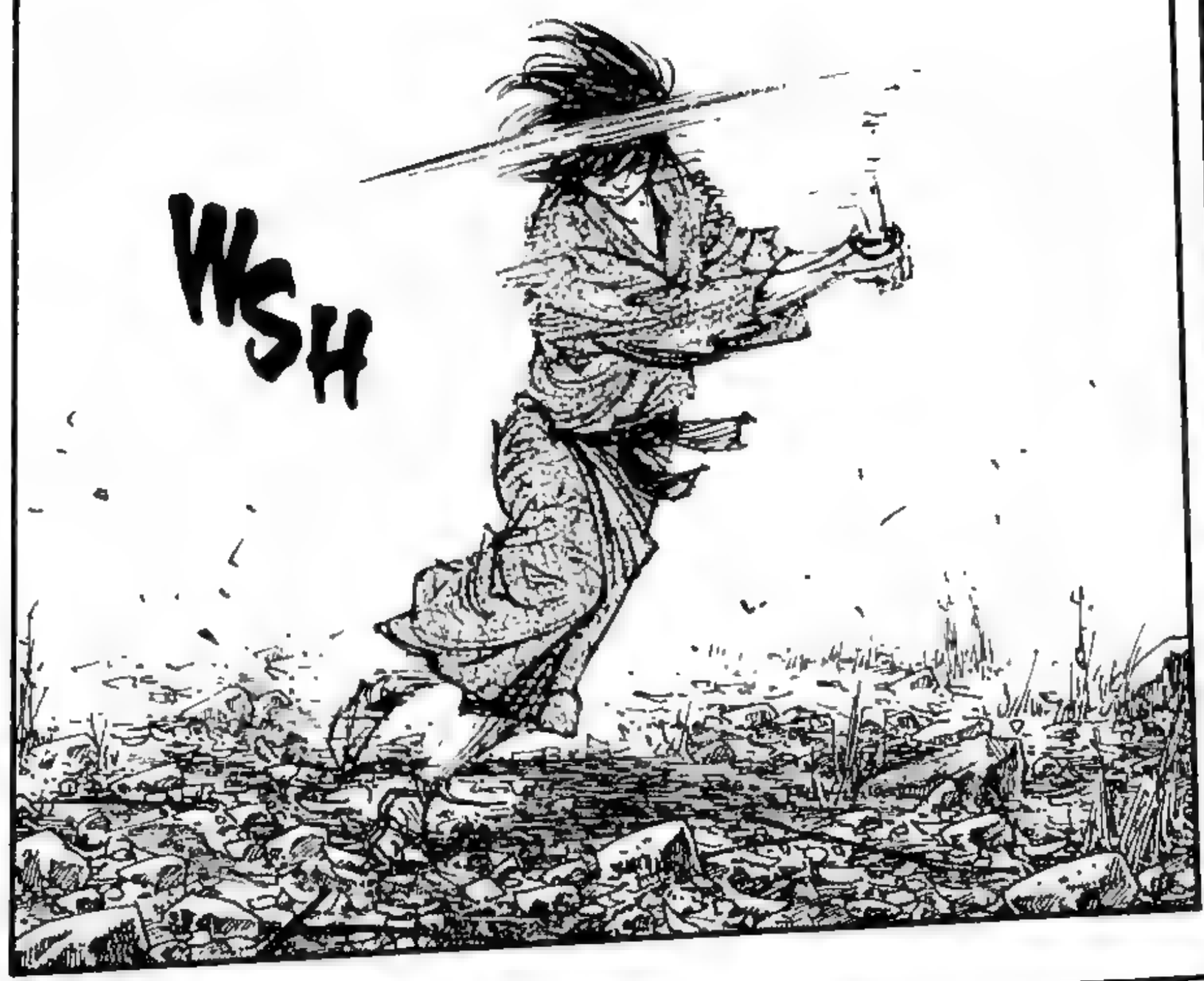
HE WAS JUST TOO FAST.

THEN WHY ARE YOU PATHETICALLY STARING UP AT THE SKY?

...MUST GO OVER IT AGAIN AND AGAIN.

BEFORE I FORGET...

FICH


WSH

TMP

TMP

WS
HH

TMP
HH
WS
WSHH

FWOOSH

FROM

HUH...?

...

THIS FORM...
WHAT IS THIS...

FROM

WHY THIS SHAPE?

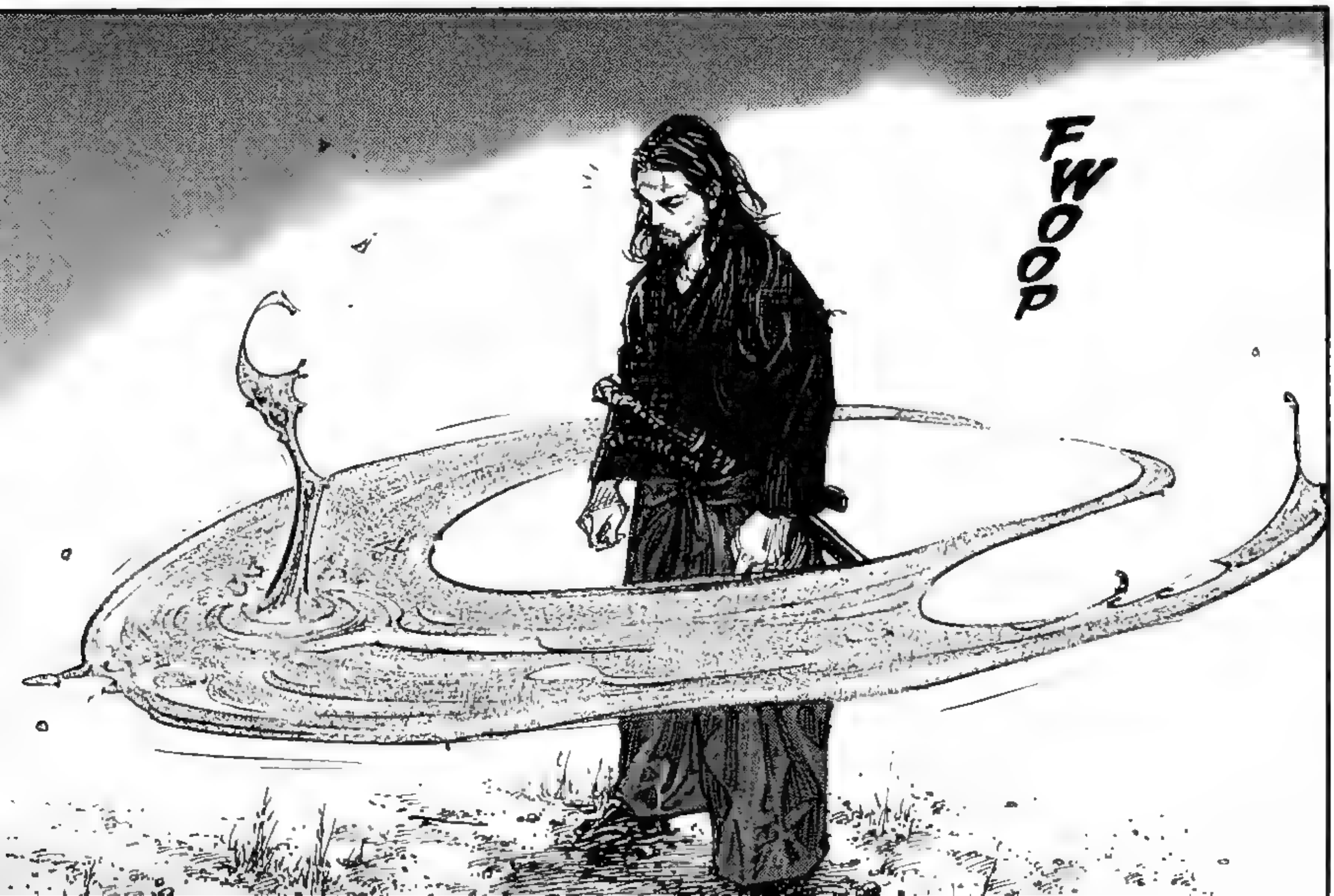
I SEE...

THIS IS THE SHAPE I'VE TAKEN.
RIGHT NOW, THAT'S WHAT I AM...

THIS BODY...
...AND THE SWORD. THAT'S WHAT I WAS BORN WITH.

SO, YOU'RE HERE TOO.

TUMP


FWOOP

FICH

HFF

FICH

HEY, WAIT!

#283 | Thirteen

TODAY, I'LL TELL YOU ABOUT A STRANGE EXPERIENCE MUSASHI ONCE SHARED WITH ME.

SO...
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
?

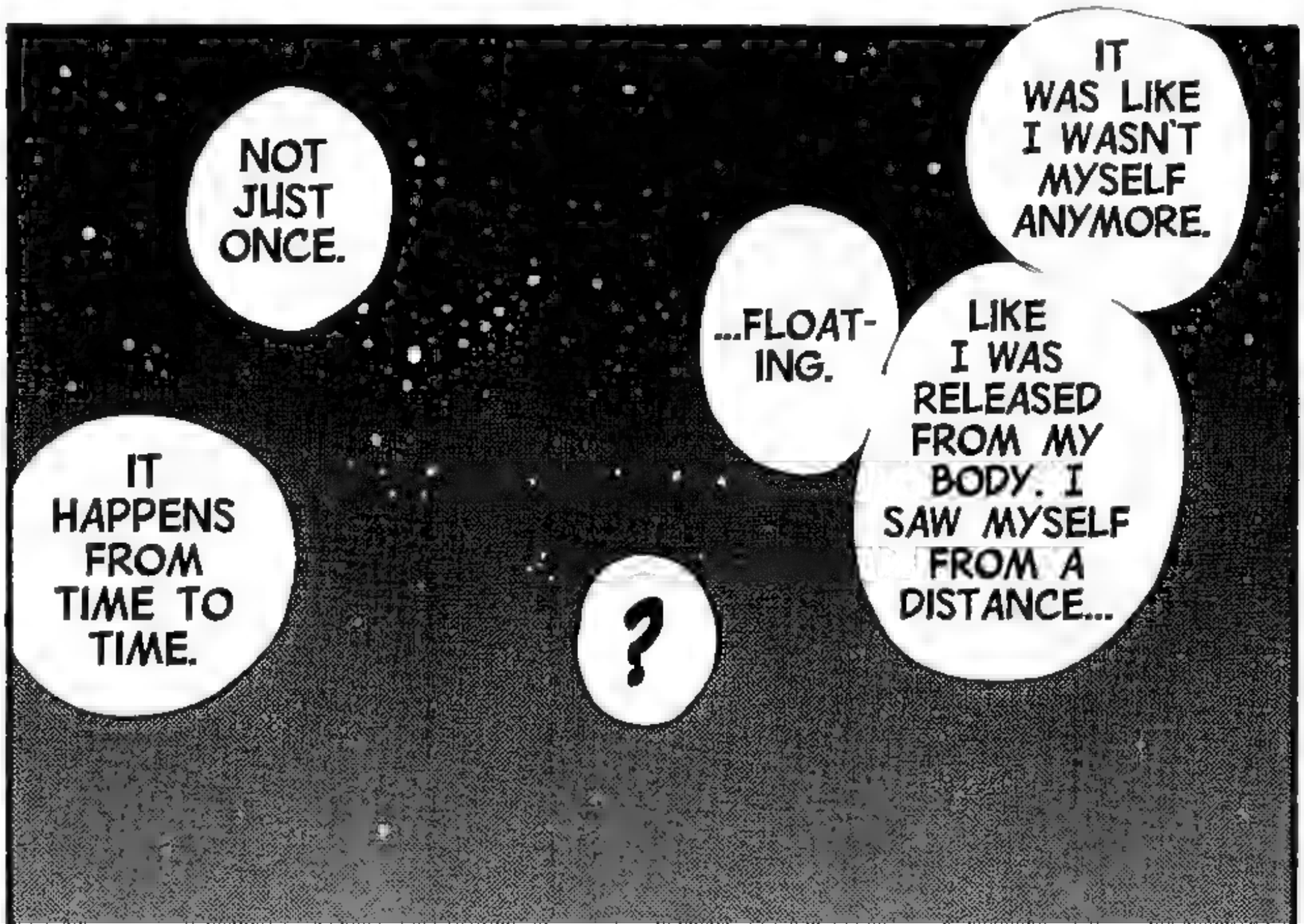
WHAT?

LET'S SEE...
WELL...
YOU WERE HERE WATCHING THE STARS... AND THEN?

HAS IT EVER HAPPENED TO YOU?
NOPE.

UH...
WELL...

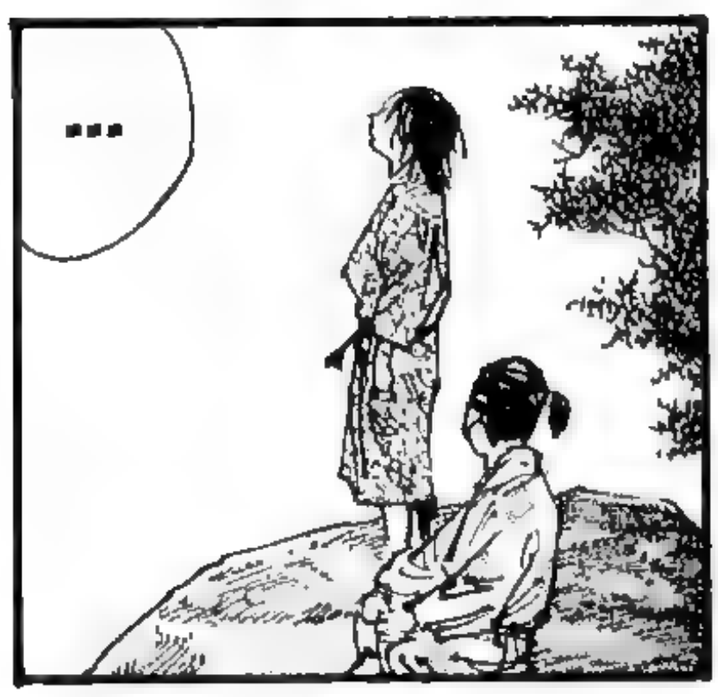
HOW ABOUT YOU?
UH...
NO, NOT YET...

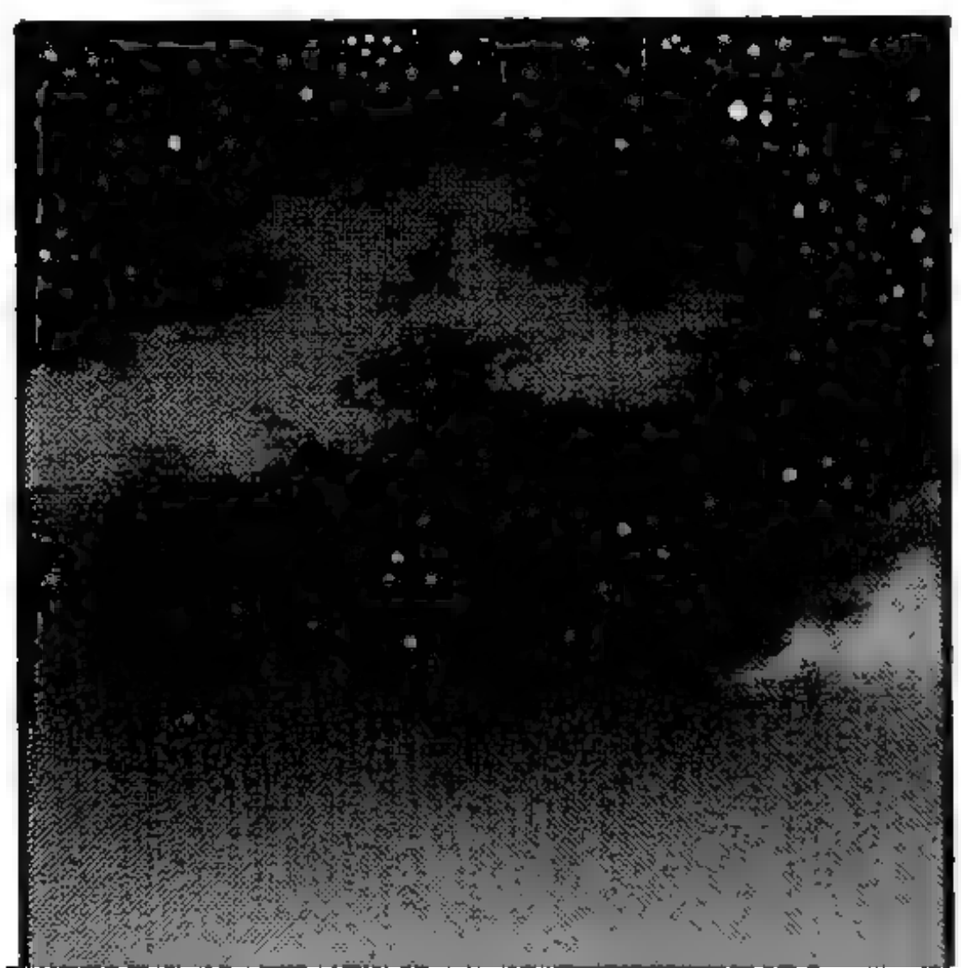

NOT JUST ONCE.
IT HAPPENS FROM TIME TO TIME.
?
...FLOAT-ING.
IT WAS LIKE I WASN'T MYSELF ANYMORE.
LIKE I WAS RELEASED FROM MY BODY. I SAW MYSELF FROM A DISTANCE...

I SEE MYSELF STANDING THERE...

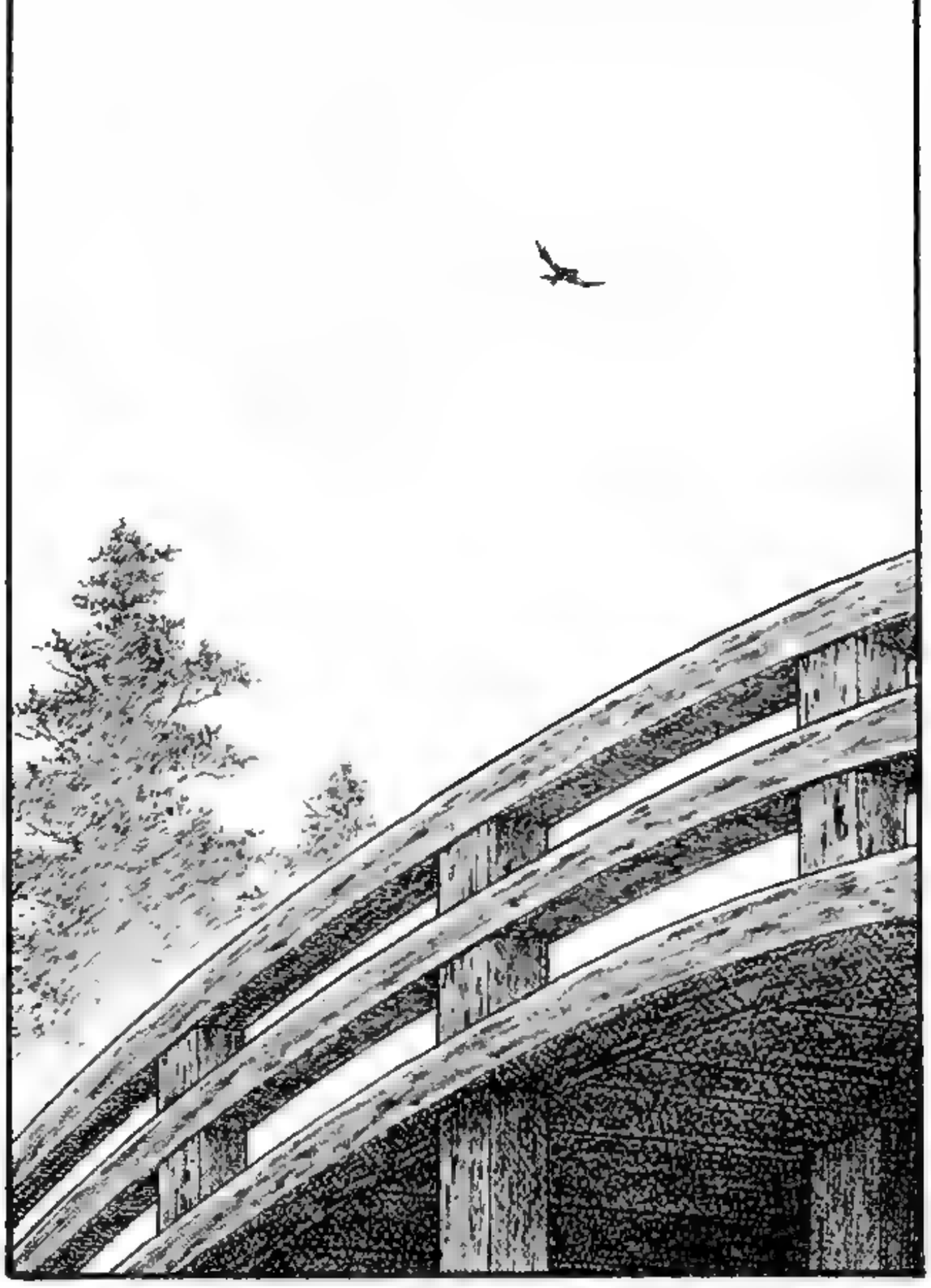
...AS IF I'M A STRANGER WHOM I'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE.

AS IF IT'S A BODY I'M JUST BORROWING.





WHY THIS BODY?
HUH?
HEY...
DOES THIS STORY TOUCH YOU, KID?
WHAT ABOUT MUSASHI FIGHTING?
TELL US ABOUT THAT.
SKRRCH SKRRCH
HM...
NOT TODAY.



...

HOW BORING.

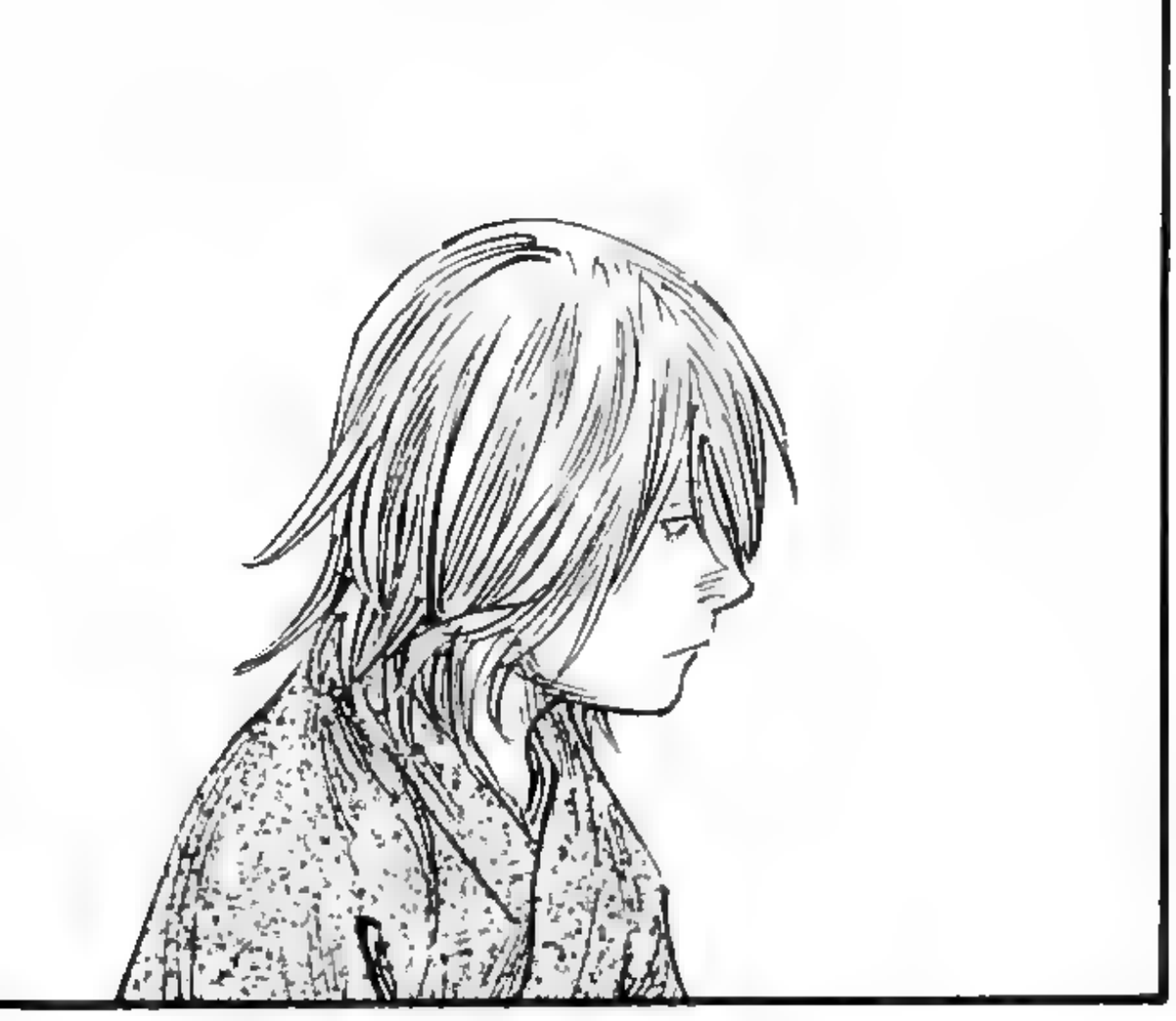
FORGET IT.
SHUF
SHUF

SO MANY THINGS I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND ABOUT WHAT MUSASHI WAS THINKING.

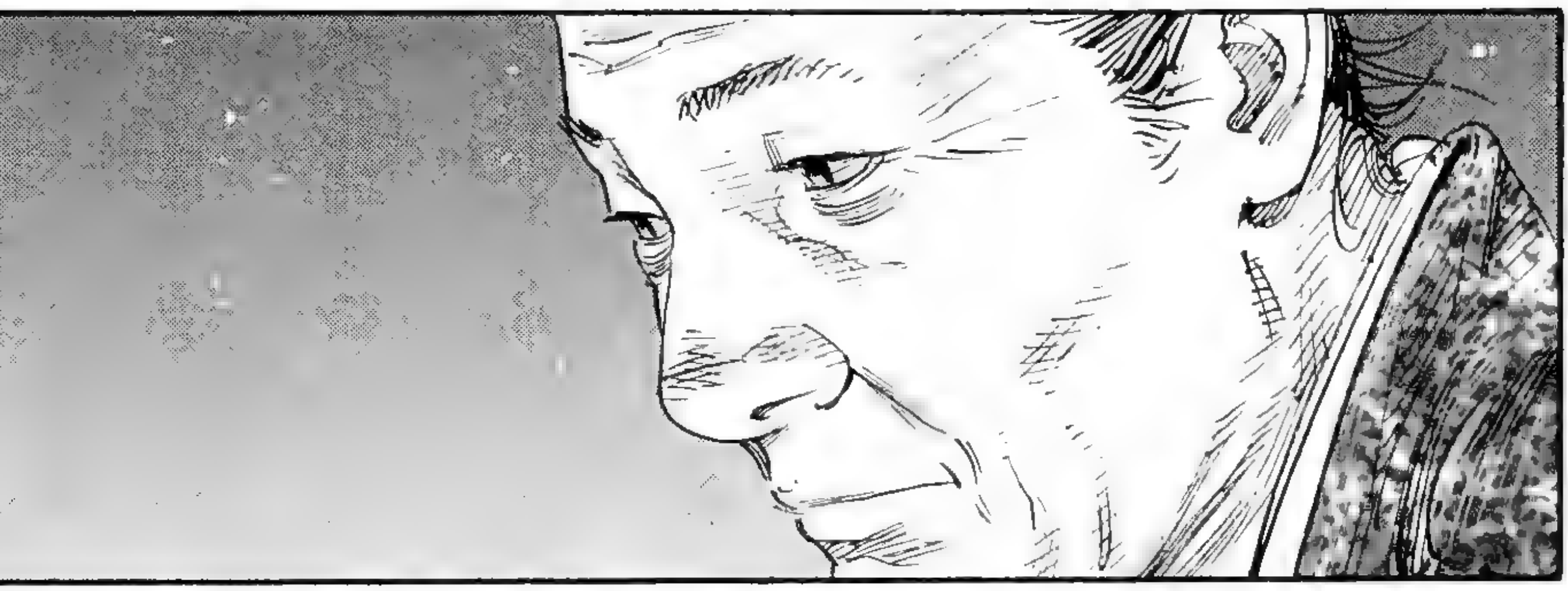
...THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT THIS STORY I LIKE.
...
BUT...
I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND A LOT...

...

!
YOUR EYES ARE AN INTER-ESTING COLOR.
KID...



THEY'RE THE COLOR OF THE SEA...



THEN WHAT EXACTLY IS YOUR BODY?

THIS BODY ISN'T ME.
IT'S LIKE I'VE EXISTED BEFORE THAT.

WHAT I MEAN IS...

UH...

HMM ...

"YOU," "ME," "THE SELF"?
WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?
WHAT ARE WE?

FWSH

PLUSH

WHOA!

USE THIS BODY TO DISCOVER...

DISCOVER WHAT?

USE THIS BODY...

HEY...

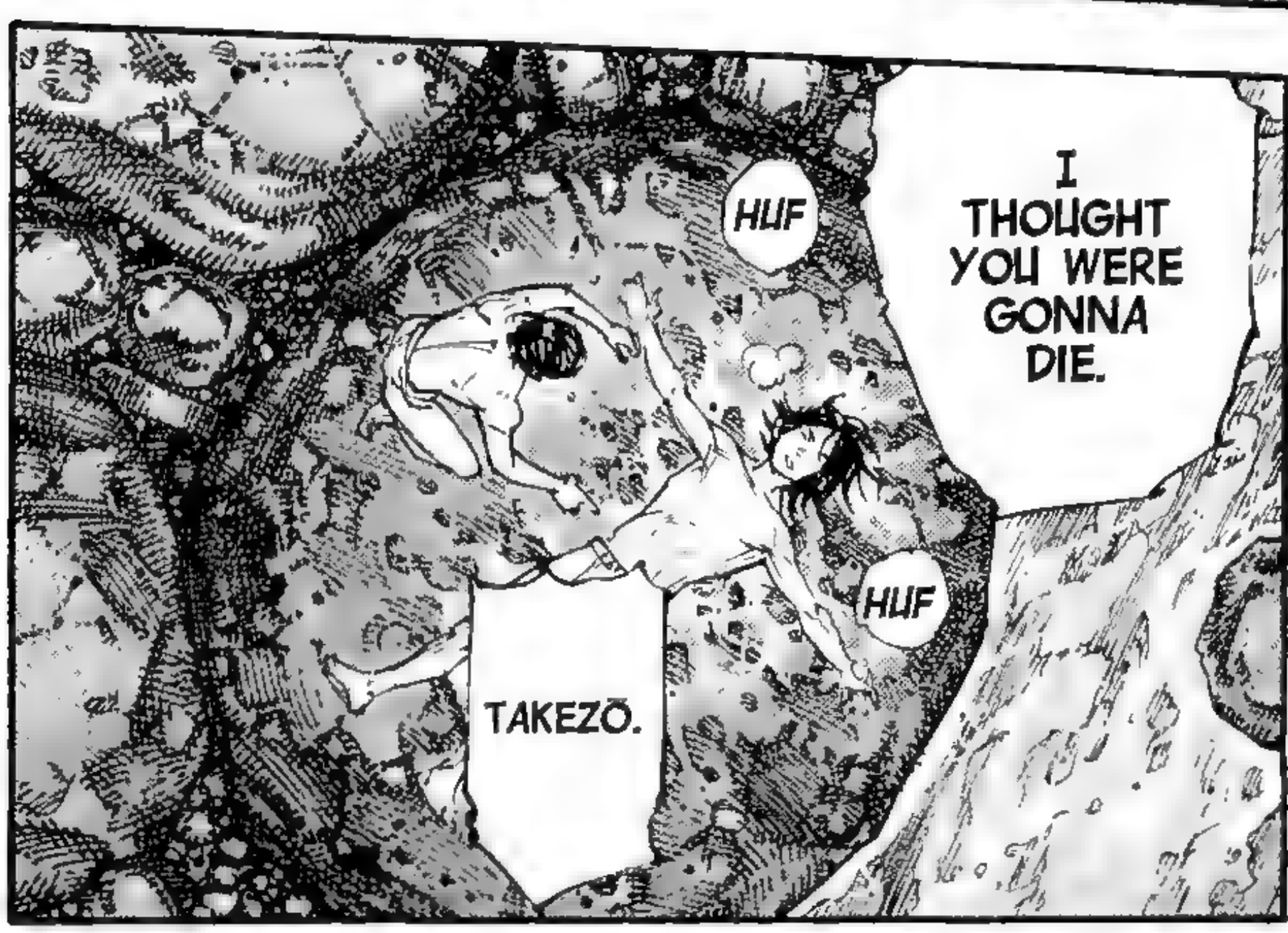
IT'S DANGEROUS OVER THERE.

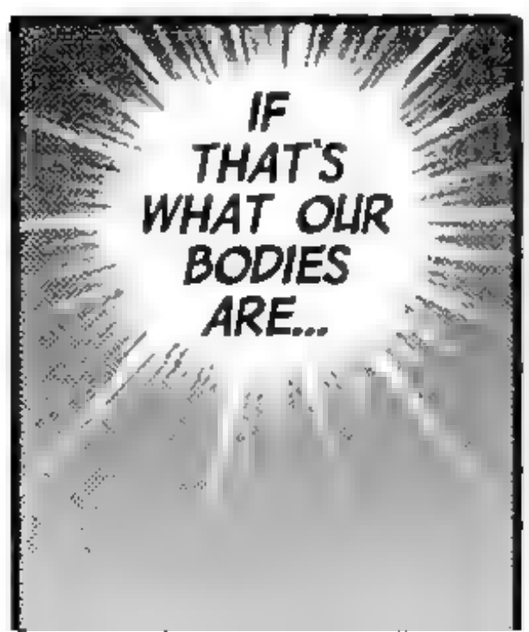
THE WATER'S ROUGH.

TAKEZŌ!

ME...

WHO I WAS BEFORE ALL OF THIS.





IT'S PEOPLE TOO.
AND IT'S NOT JUST LIMITED TO THINGS...
EVERYONE WE MEET.

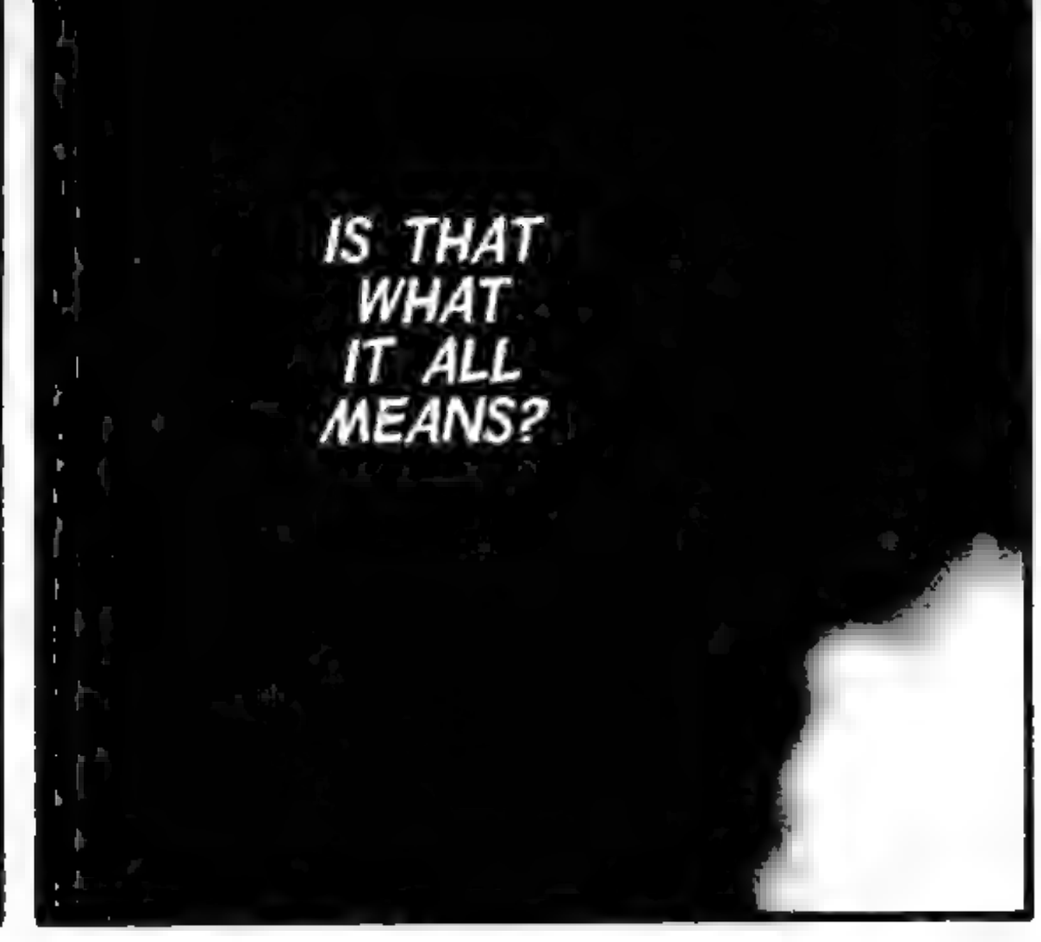
?

...FOR THAT PURPOSE.
HUF
HUF
...THEN IT'S NOT JUST LIMITED TO OUR BODIES. EVERYTHING IN THIS WHOLE WORLD EXISTS...

OUR FATHERS, OUR MOTHERS...

IF EVERYONE WE MEET IS HERE FOR THAT PURPOSE...

THEN THERE'S NO NEED TO HATE ANYONE.


IS THAT WHAT IT ALL MEANS?

SHVRR
SHVRR
SHVRR
...
SHVRR
SHVRR
SHVRR

SHVRR
SHVRR
SHVRR

FWOOSH
UMF!

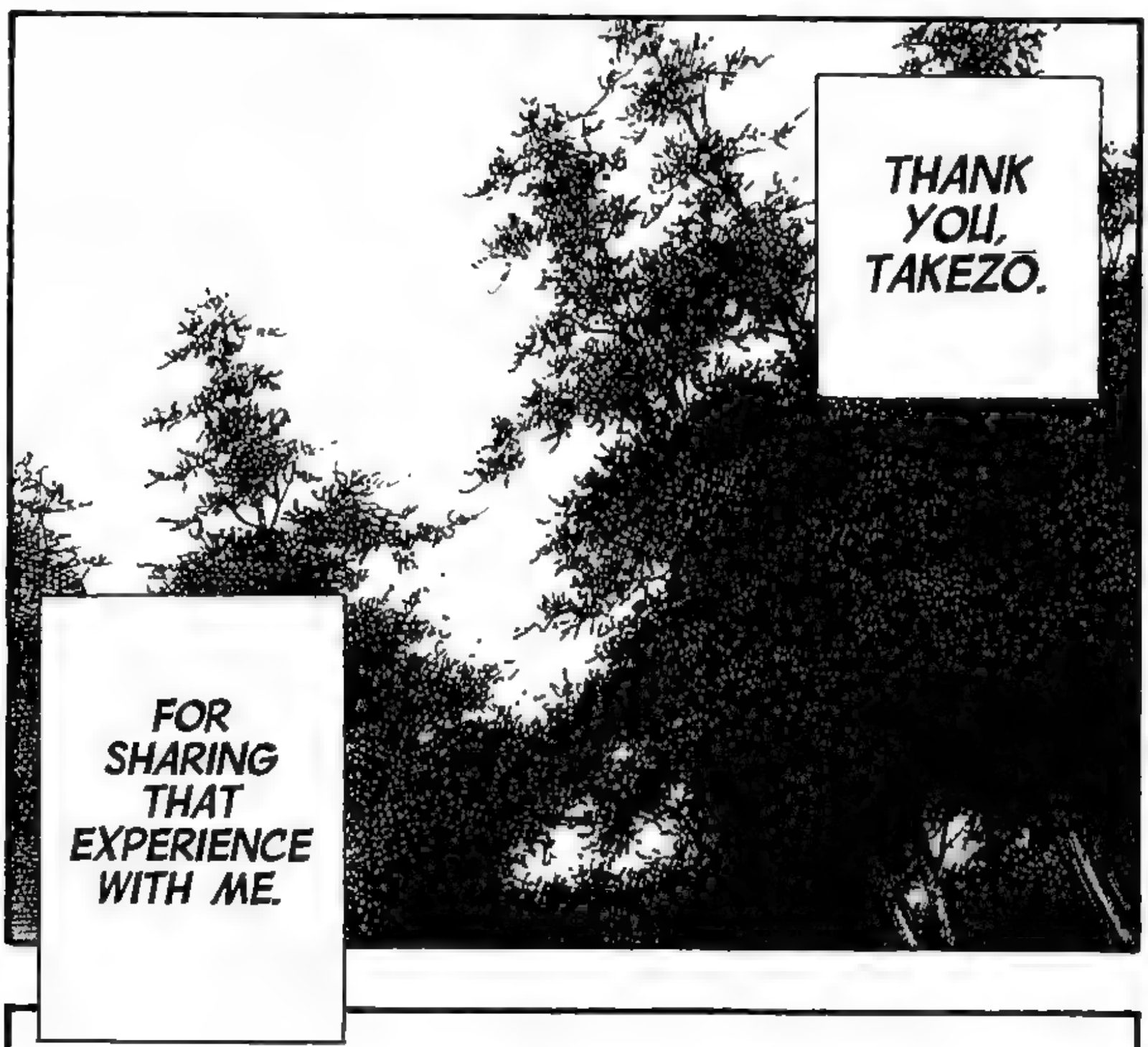
TMP

ACHOO

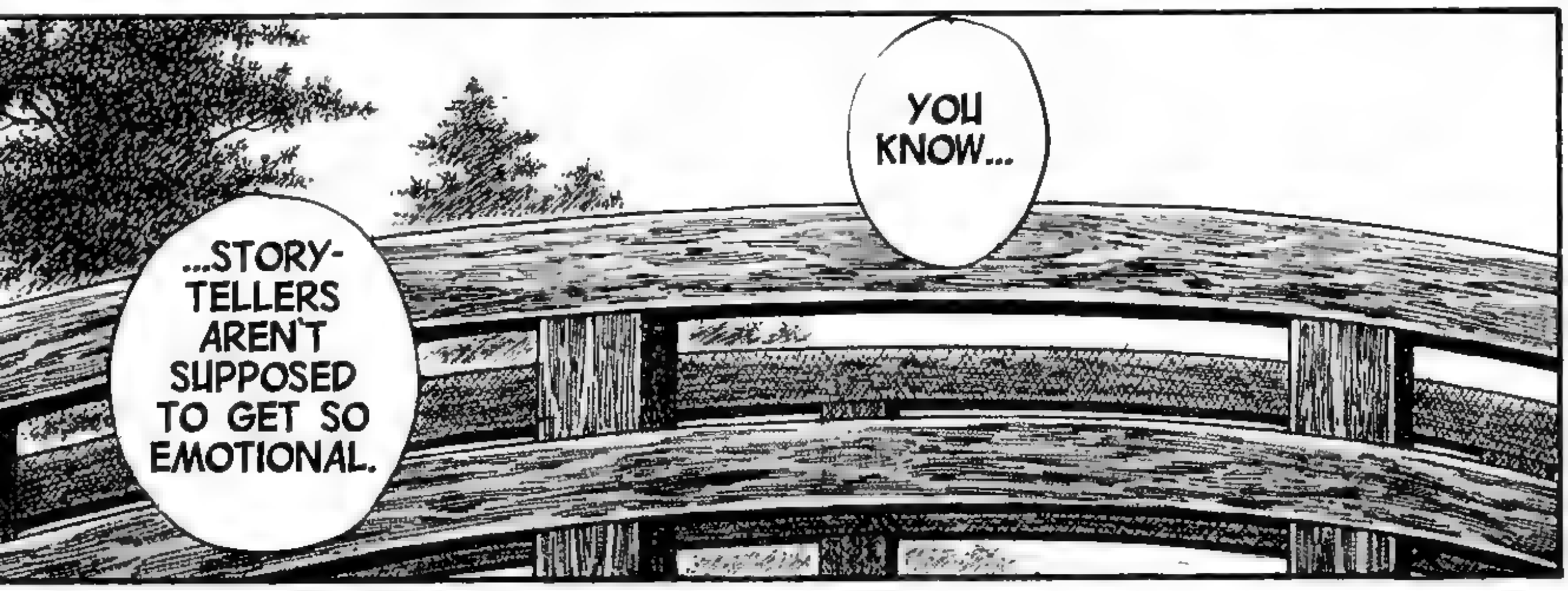
HAH!

HAH!

I'M SORRY I HAD NOTHING TO SAY.


THANK YOU, TAKEZŌ.
FOR SHARING THAT EXPERIENCE WITH ME.

BUT LET ME SAY THIS NOW...


...STORY-TELLERS AREN'T SUPPOSED TO GET SO EMOTIONAL.
YOU KNOW...

IT'S SO UNUSUAL FOR YOU, TAKEZŌ...
...FOR YOU TO TALK SO MUCH.
BUT...

HM?
WHAT'S THIS?
HUH?
SNIFFL

...IF YOU KEEP TALKING ALL THAT NONSENSE.
YOU'LL NEVER MAKE ANYTHING OF YOURSELF...

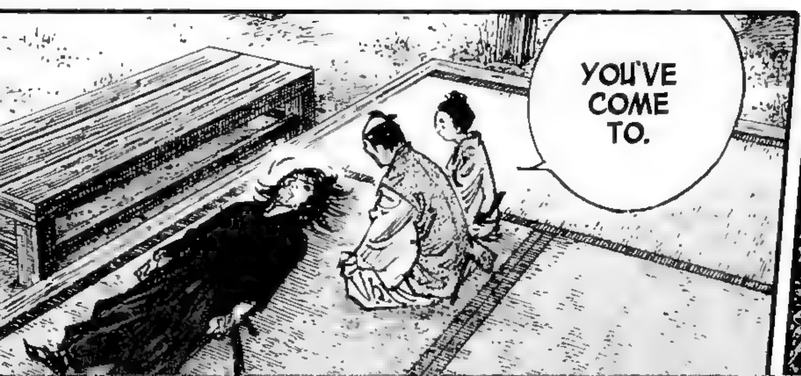
...
SHUF
DON'T WORRY.

HEY...
TAKEZŌ ...

FROM TODAY...
...I'LL NO LONGER BE STARING AT THE STARS LIKE THAT.

I KNOW WHAT I AM.
A DEMON CHILD.
I'LL BECOME A SWORD DEMON...
...INVINCIBLE UNDER THE SUN.

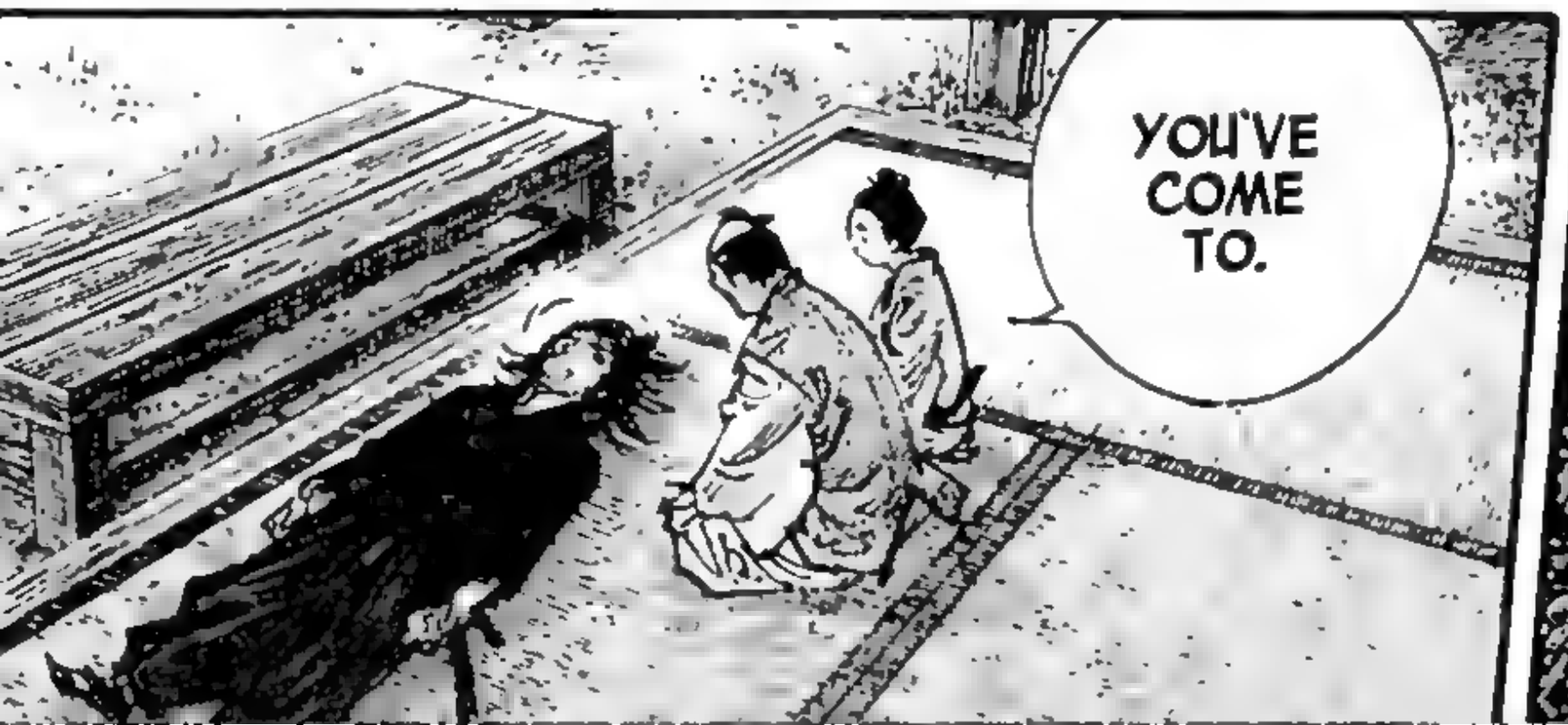
#284 | Spiral



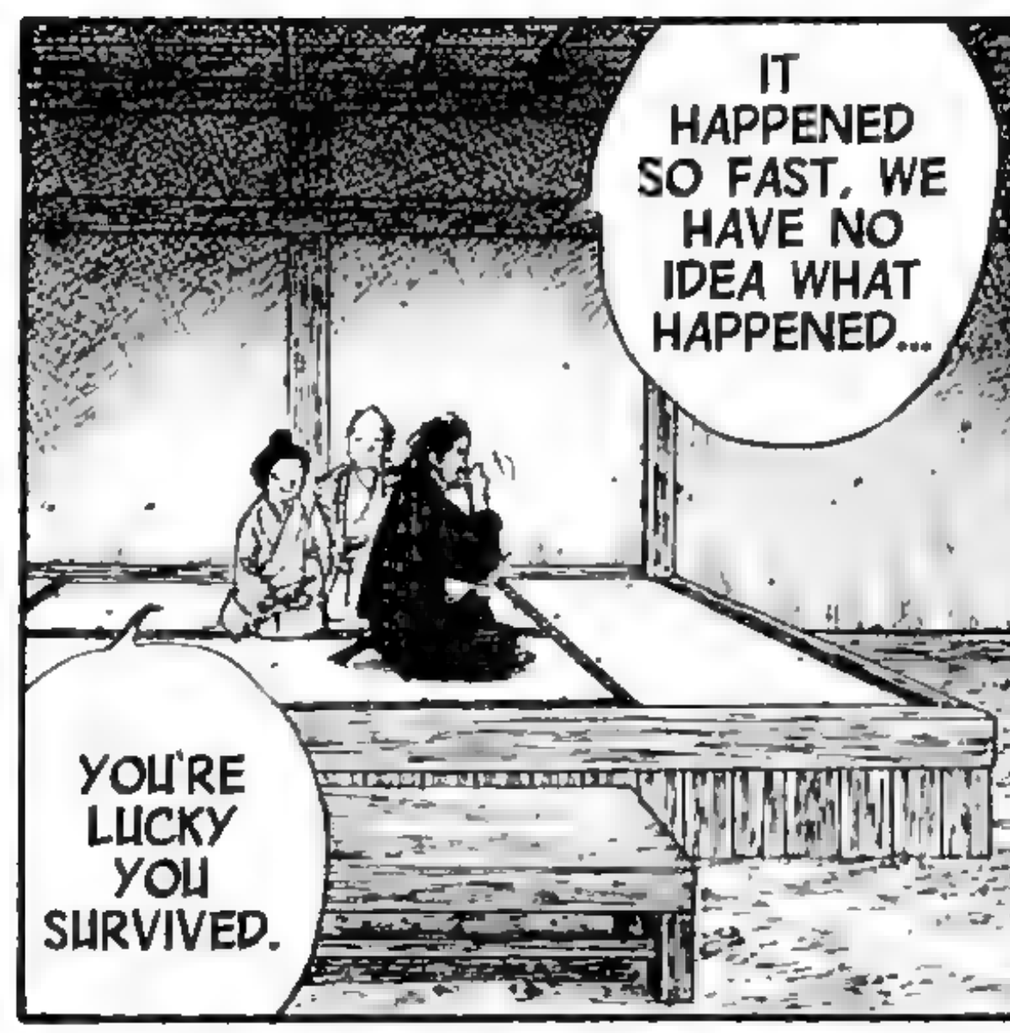
I AM SHINMEN TAKEZŌ.

#284 | Spiral

AH...


YOU'VE COME TO.

KRIK
KRIK
...


IT HAPPENED SO FAST, WE HAVE NO IDEA WHAT HAPPENED...
YOU'RE LUCKY YOU SURVIVED.

FSSH
FSSH
FSSH

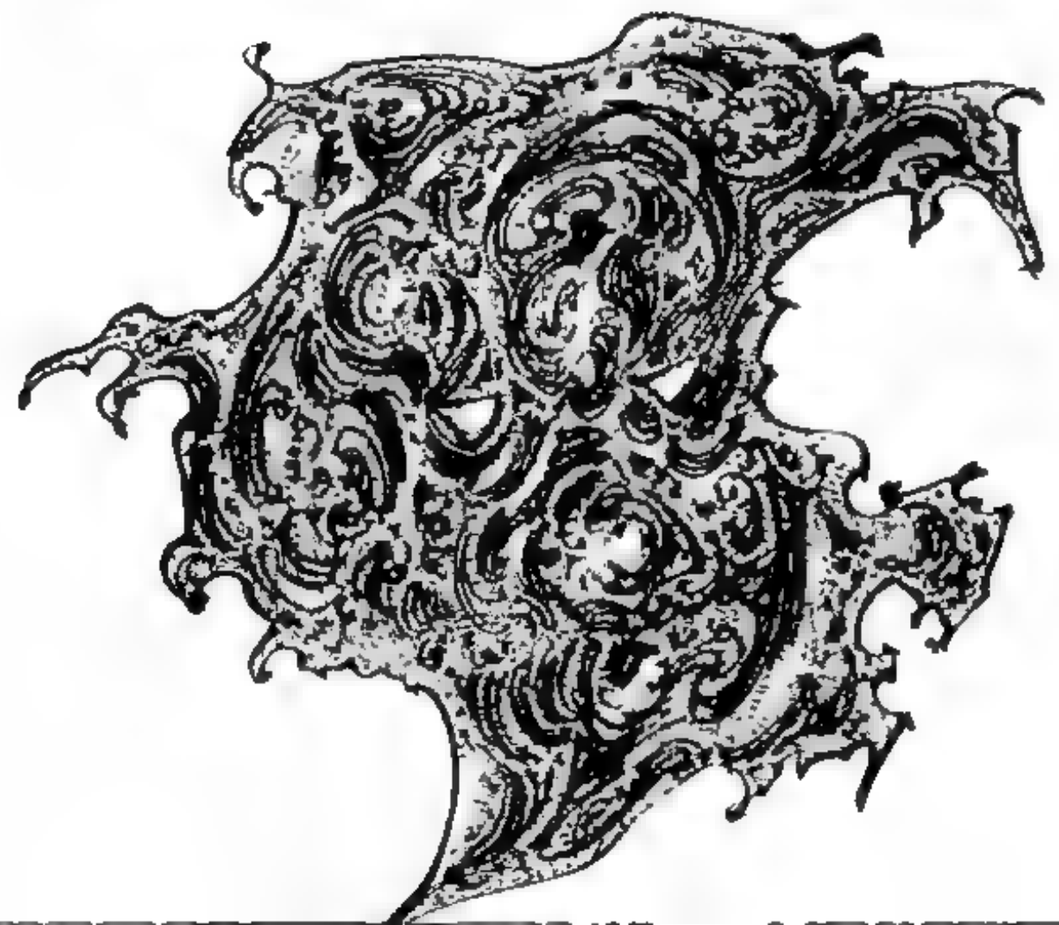
FICH
FWICH

AN ENEMY MORE BOTHERSOME THAN MY INJURED LEG...
AND IT ISN'T...
...THE OPPONENT WHO STOOD BEFORE ME.

I MUST OVERCOME THE FEAR OF NOT BEING ABLE TO USE MY LEG.

FUELED BY THE DRIVE TO PROVE ONE'S STRENGTH.
FEAR...
THE DRIVE TO BE KNOWN AS THE STRONGEST.
IN ORDER TO HIDE ITSELF, FEAR CALLS OUT TO HATRED.
THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND ALL OF THIS IS...
IT CALLS OUT TO THE FEAR OF LOSING IT ALL.

THE
SPIRAL
OF
KILLING.



?

ZWRR

HEY...

HUH?

I THOUGHT I OVERCAME THAT.

YOU SHOULD SMILE MORE.

SMILE...

GLMP

SHP
SWMP
SHP

NEED TO SIT.

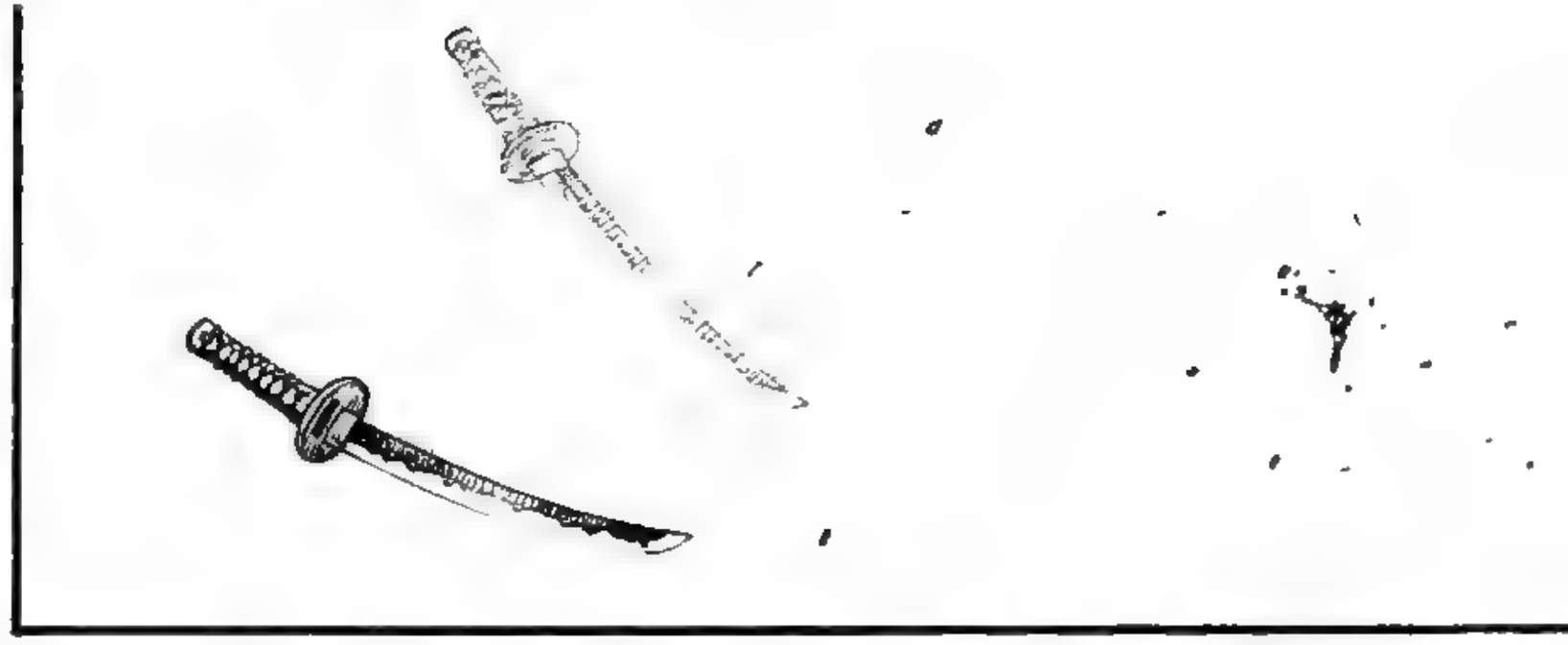
HUF

HUF

HUF

I WAS HIDING MY RIGHT TO BAIT HIM. THEN I'D GET HIM WITH MY LEFT.
IT DIDN'T WORK WITH THAT BASTARD...

SMIRK



HEH HEH...
DIDN'T EVEN GIVE ME THE SPACE TO DRAW MY SWORD.

THERE'S JUST NO END TO THIS FUN.

KLAKK

HUYAHH!

WHUD

BUT HERE...

...HAVE A LOOK.

YOU WERE GIVEN THIS HANDICAP.

I'LL GIVE YOU 1,000 POINTS.

WHICH MEANS...

KOJIRŌ'S STRONGER THAN YOU.

#285 | Learning to Smile

OTSU...
AHHH
SNIFF
SNIFF
SNIFF
SNIFF
NOT AGAIN, TAKEZŌ.
YOU ASKED ME THE SAME THING LAST YEAR...
AND THE YEAR BEFORE THAT!
SNIFF SNIFF
DO YOU SMELL THIS FLOWER? WHAT'S IT CALLED?
IT'S CALLED...
SORRY, OTSU...
BUT IT DOESN'T MATTER.
I FORGOT AGAIN THIS YEAR.

THE SMELL'S HERE.

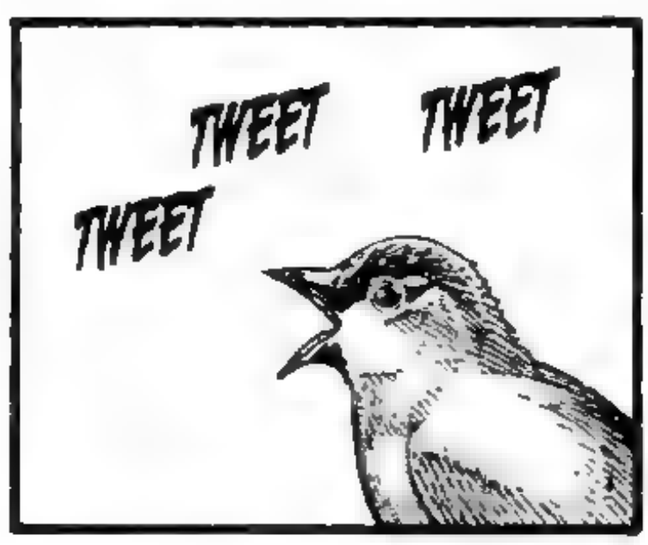
WHETHER I KNOW WHAT IT'S CALLED OR NOT...

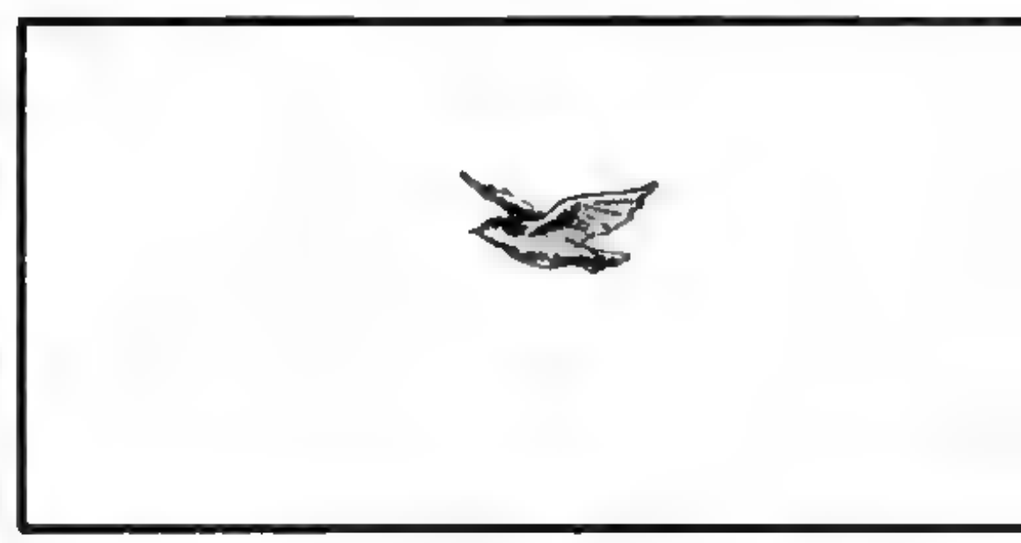
SMILE...

.....

YOU SHOULD SMILE MORE...

AHEM


TWEET TWEET
TWEET



TWEET TWEET
TWEET TWEET
NOW WHERE SHOULD I GO?

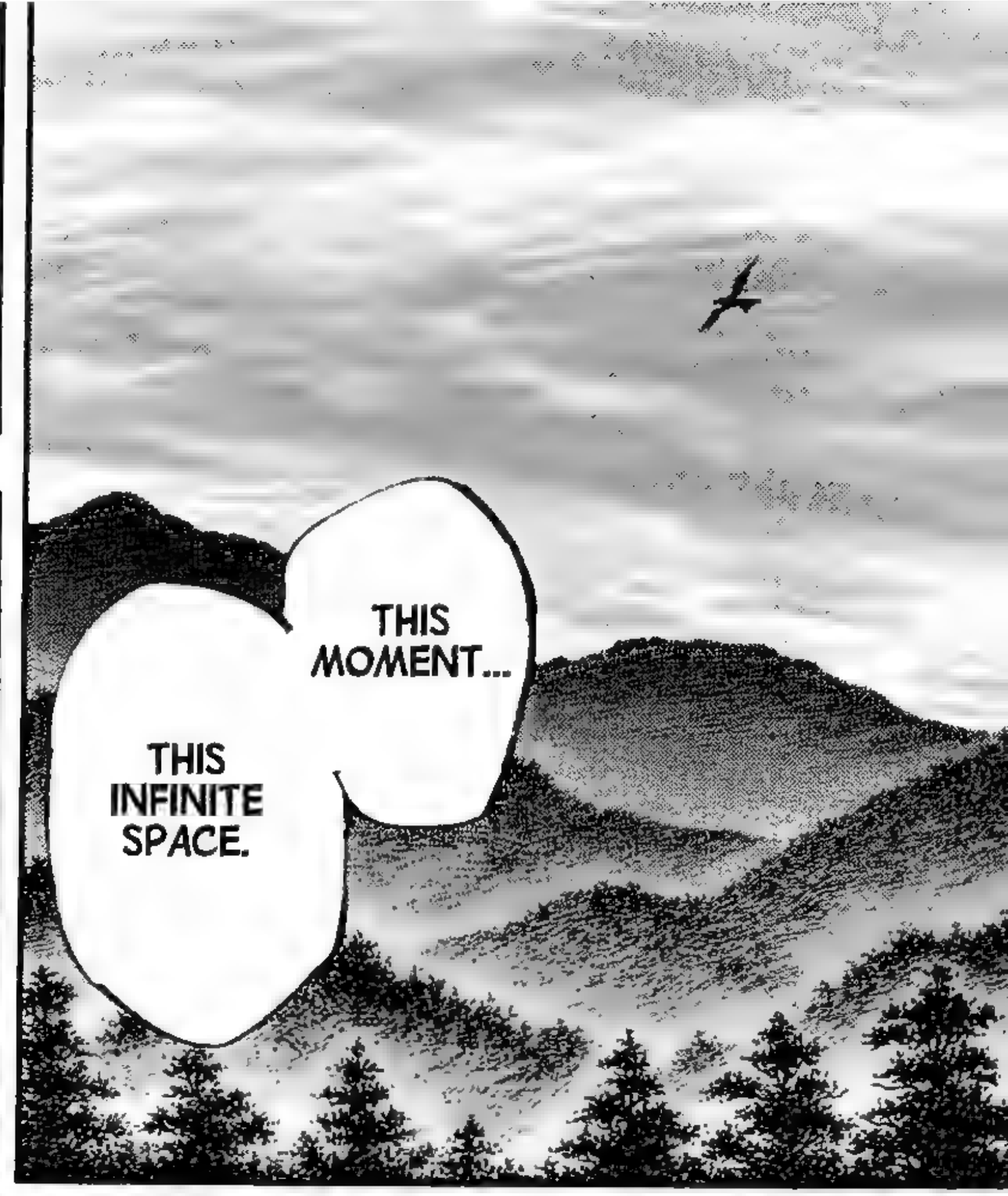
FICH

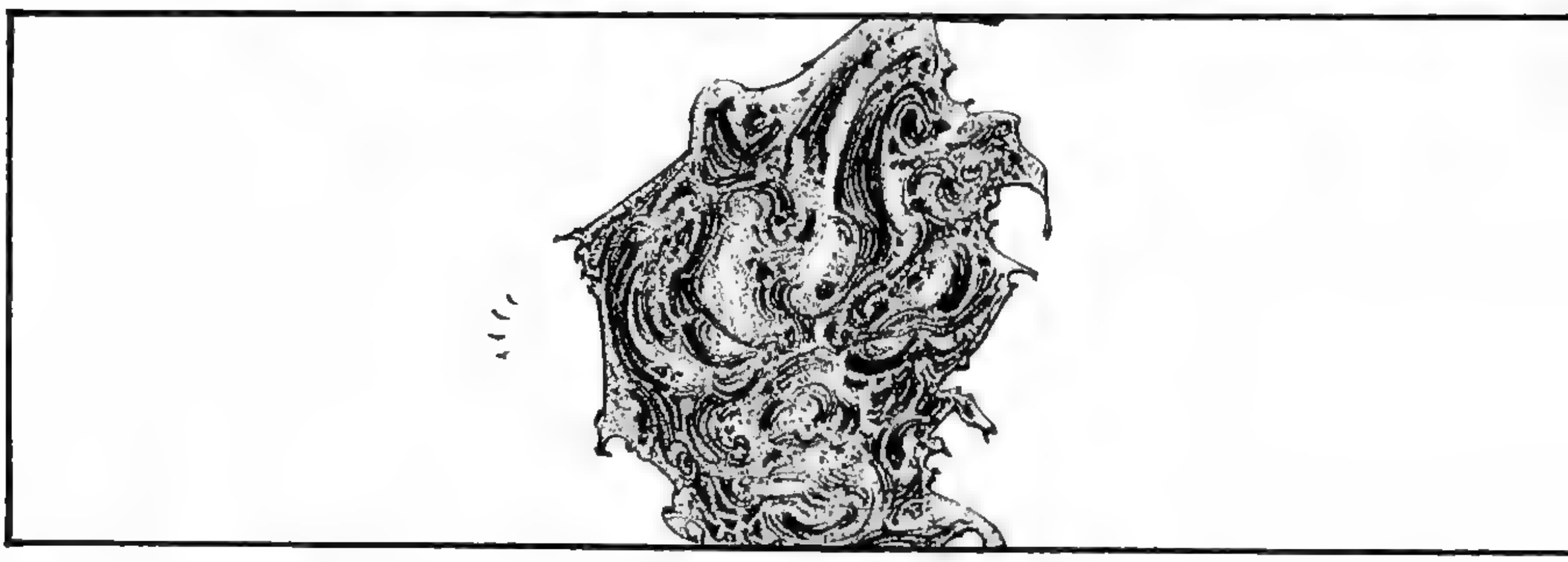
FICH
FICH

WAIT...
IS IT STILL NECESSARY ?
DO I STILL NEED TO WANDER AROUND?

WHAT EXACTLY AM I SEEKING OUT?
INSTEAD OF NOW...

.....


THIS MOMENT...
THIS INFINITE SPACE.



...
IT'LL BE TOO LATE AT THAT POINT.

DON'T PUT WORDS TO IT.
HEY

THE MOMENT YOU SAY "NOW"...

...IT CEASES TO BE NOW.

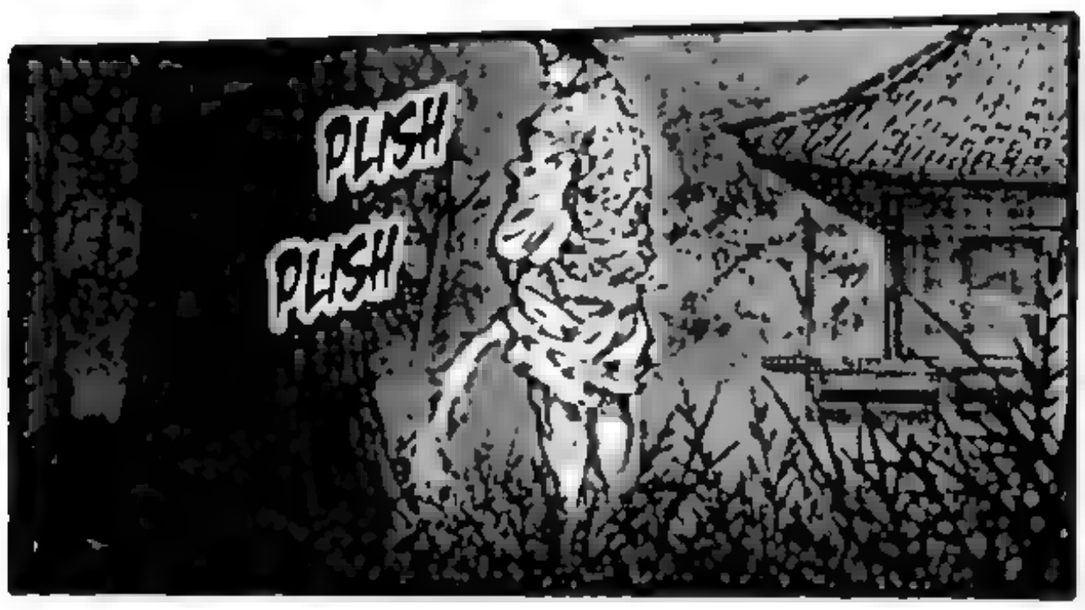
OLD MAN, I WANT TO GO BACK TO THE CAVE.

I CAN ALWAYS GO BACK.
HERE AND NOW.
MOVE.
CUT THROUGH THE WORDS.
SIDE TO SIDE.

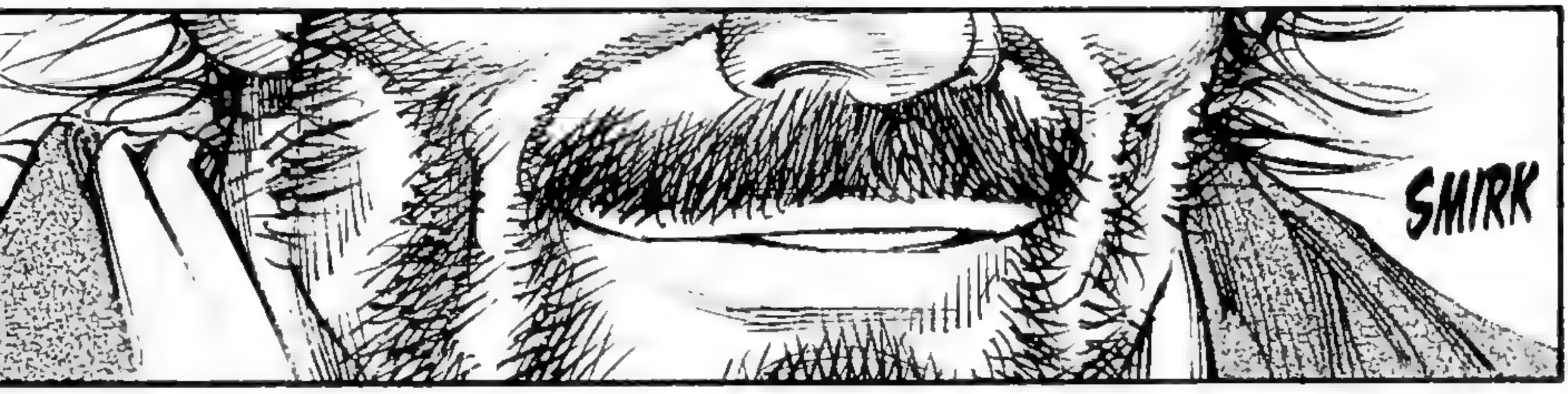
BE RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF NOW.

BE RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF NOW.

HMPH
...


PLISH
PLISH

...


SMIRK

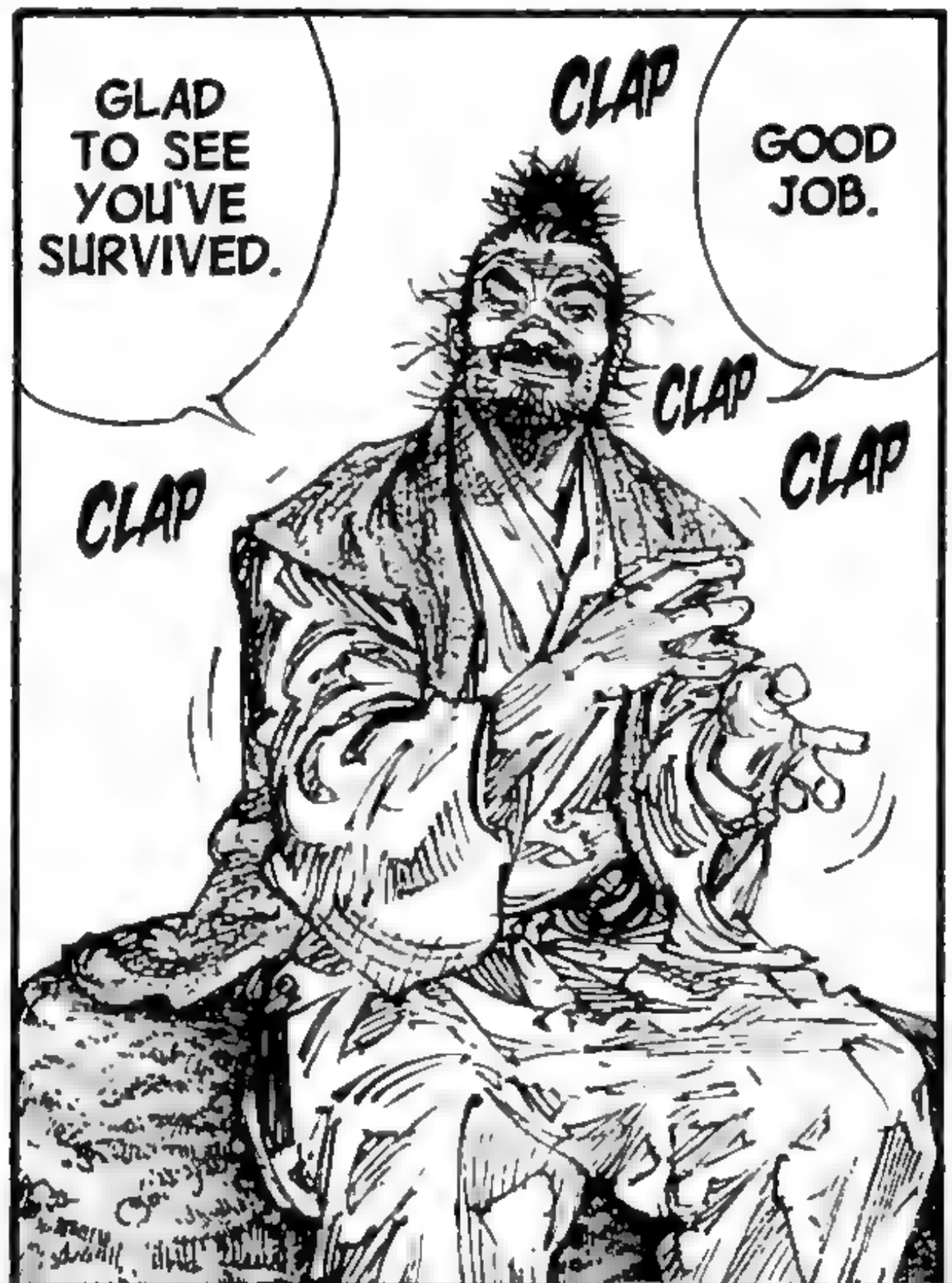
FICH
FICH

FICH
FICH

FICH

FICH
FICH
FICH

CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP



...HAS TURNED OUT TO BE A TIGER.

KANEMAKI SENSEI...

THAT STRAY CAT YOU PICKED UP...

KRCH

A HUGE...

...MAN-EATING TIGER.

DO YOU HATE ME...

...FOR ABANDONING YOU?

IN TIME...

I'M HAPPY YOU CAME...

...I WAS LOOKING FOR A PLAYMATE.

...YOU'LL APPRECIATE WHAT I DID.

IF YOU LIVE THAT LONG, THAT IS.

HEY HEY...
HOW ABOUT WE DO THIS AFTER BREAKFAST ...?
ANGER WILL GIVE RISE TO WEAK-NESSES.

AHHH

ARRRR!

smile

#286 | Tiger vs. Tiger

AHHH

FMP
AHHH

WHAT?!

AHA!

IT'S AS IF HE'S NOT MOVING!!

HM?!

HE'S LEFT IT BEHIND BACK THERE! LOOK AT THAT FACE!

HIS ANGER'S ONLY AN EXCUSE FOR DRAWING HIS SWORD.

SERENE AND DEVOID OF COLOR!

JUST AS THIS TREE PUTS ITS BODY AND SPIRIT INTO BEING THIS TREE...

JUST AS THIS ROCK PUTS ITS ALL INTO BEING THIS ROCK AT THIS MOMENT.

HIS BODY AND MIND ARE AT ONE WITH HIS SWORD.

IN THAT RESPECT, THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE ENCOUNTERED ANYONE BEYOND ME.
TOO BAD...
...HIS SWORD WORK STILL LACKS DEPTH. HE'S STILL...

SOFT LIKE A CHILD.

NO REGRETS, KOJIRŌ.

THUNK
THIS WAS HIS TRUE TARGET?!

THUNK
THIS WAS HIS TRUE TARGET?!

I GOT GREEDY.
SPRT
SPRT
SPRT
TRYING TO DODGE HIM!
...AND GOT DISTRACTED.
IN OTHER WORDS...
I THOUGHT I HAD YOU AT MY FINGERTIPS...

I WAS OVER-CONFIDENT!

TSK...

JUST A SCRATCH, THIS ISN'T THE END.

HEH HEH...

A REAL TIGER, YOU.

...

ZZZZ
SCHNORR

YOU GET 1,000 POINTS.

SNORR

#287 Nonsense About No Sword
...
IT'S GETTING COLD.

A FEELING AS HEAVY AS IRON. I'LL NEVER FORGET IT.

HE HAD SUCH DEPTH...

JUST LIKE THAT TIME BEFORE...

HYUU

TWICE IN A LIFETIME.

MUSASHI...

FWS

I THOUGHT YOU WERE JUST LIKE YAGYU SEKISHUSAI...

H

H

THOUGHT YOU MIGHT'VE TURNED OUT SPINELESS, BUT...

...ALL THAT NONSENSE ABOUT "NO SWORD."

WE'RE TIGERS...

HEH HEH.

...YOU'VE GOT SHARP FANGS AND CLAWS. JUST LIKE ME AND KOJIRŌ...

HEH HEH HEH...

ISN'T THAT RIGHT?

...

SHUF

WHAT'S THAT?

OR MAYBE A BIG BEAR. IT DOESN'T MATTER.

WHERE TO?
NOW THEN, TIME TO GO.
FICH

THIS NONSENSE ABOUT NO SWORD...

NO SWORD...

FWSHH

I DON'T GET IT.

TANNA
TANNA

THWM

THWM

NO SWORD, EH...?
HEH HEH...

THWM

THWM

TENNN

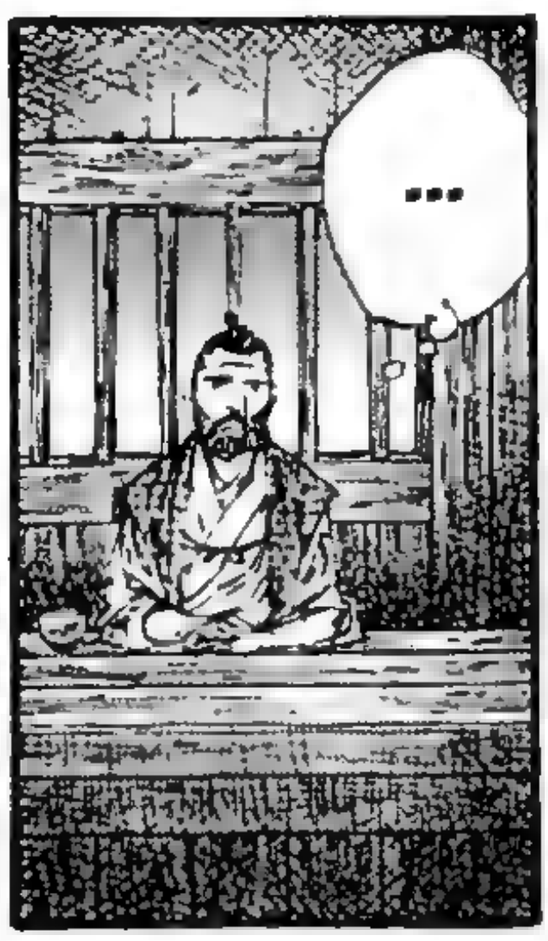
TENNN

NO SWORD, EH...?
HEH HEH...

HA HA HA

WHERE'S THE FUN IN THAT?

ALSO, TWO PIECES OF MOCHI.
I'D LIKE TO PAY.
YES, SIR.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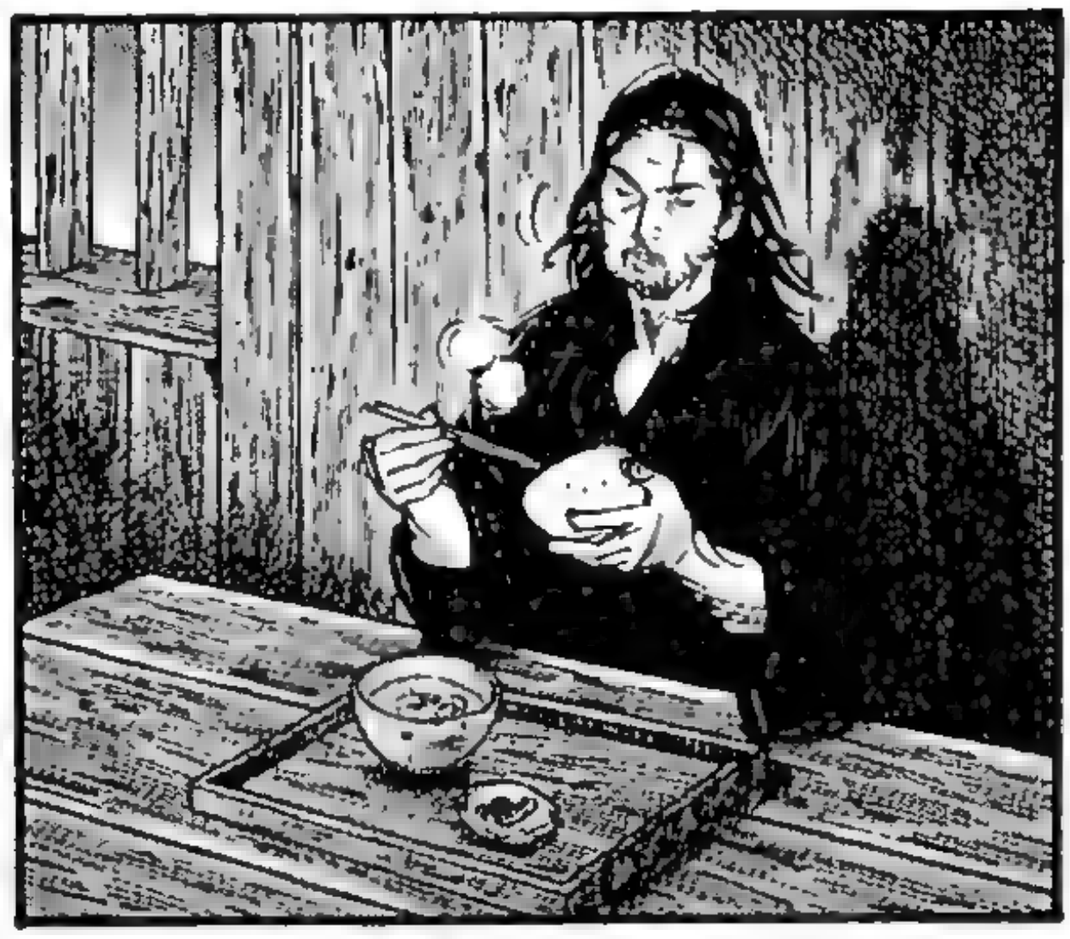
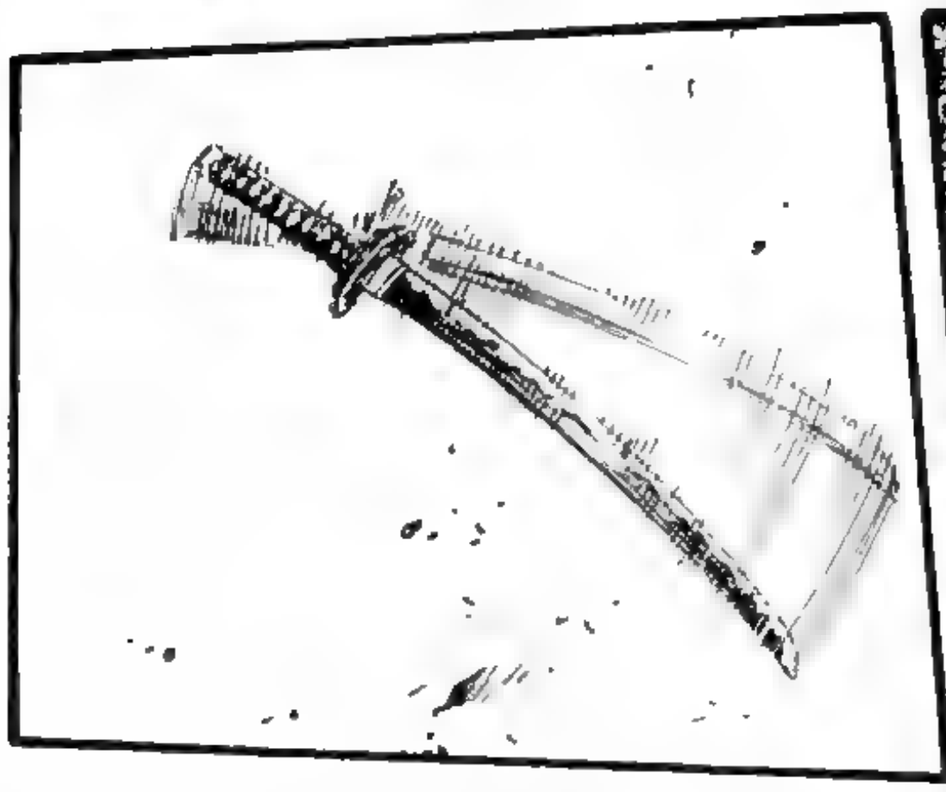
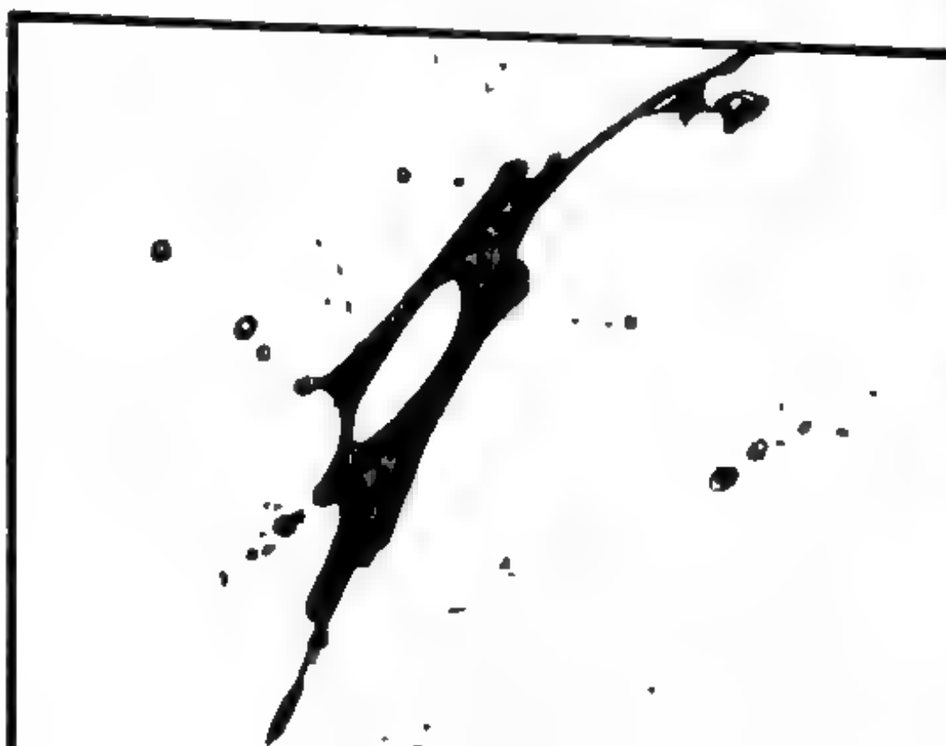


EXCUSE ME...
AREN'T YOU MIYAMOTO MUSASHI?





ZW
M

SLMP

IT'S AN HONOR.

I GOT TO CHALLENGE AN INVINCIBLE SWORDSMAN.

I HAVE NO REGRETS...

KOJIRŌ'S STRONGER...

YOU MUST BE UNDER YAGYŪ'S SPELL.

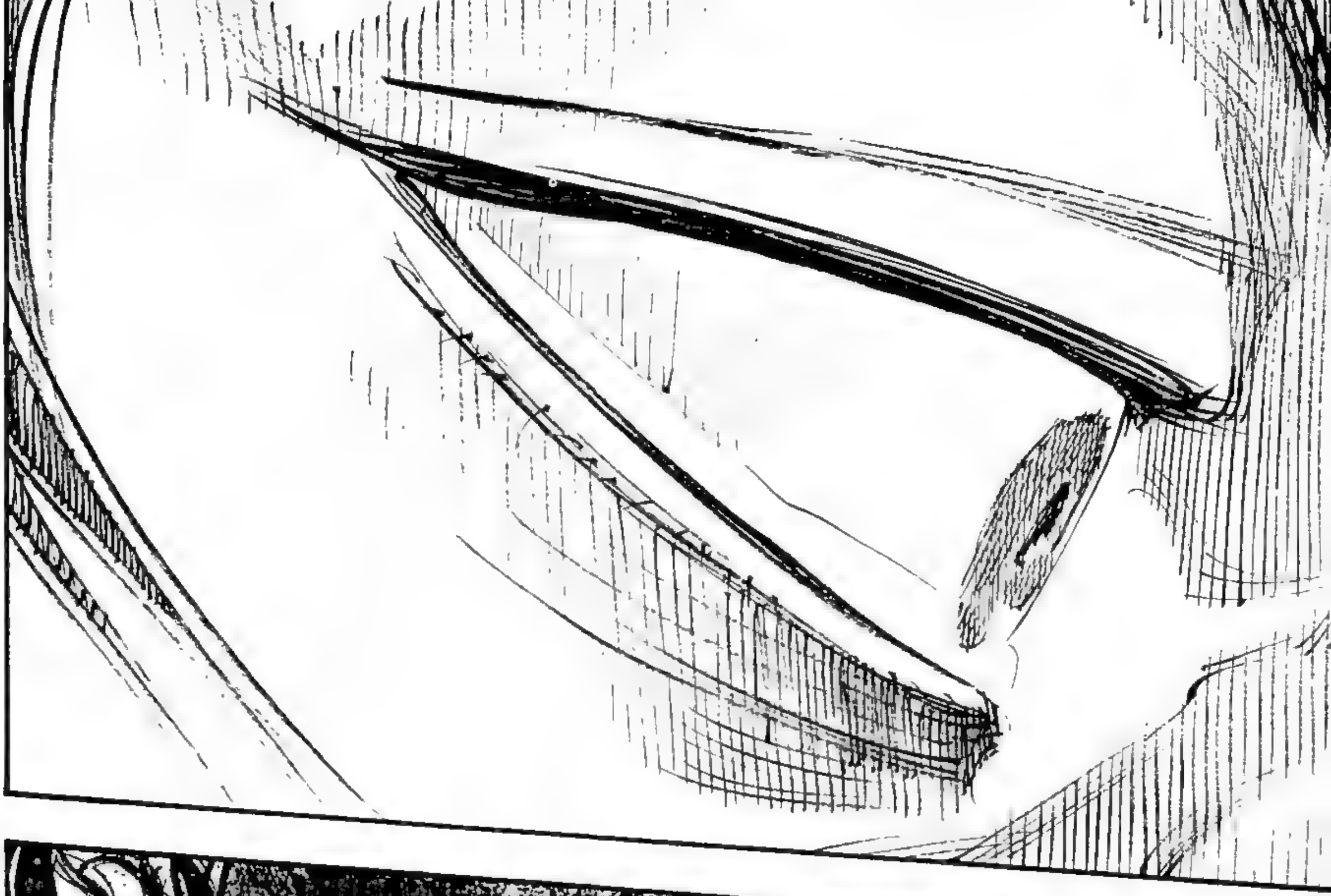
YOU SAY THAT AFTER KILLING A HUNDRED MEN?

INVINCIBILITY IS A MIRAGE?

WHAT MATTERS MOST IS...
...IT DOESN'T MATTER WHETHER YOU'RE RIGHT OR WRONG.
ONCE YOU'VE DECIDED TO LIVE BY THE SWORD...
...WHETHER IT'S FUN.

SMILE MORE...

WHETHER IT'S FUN...



IT WAS SO FUN I COULD HARDLY STAND IT.

EVEN IN THE DARK OF NIGHT, I WAS NOT SCARED...

I WAS NEVER ALONE.

BECAUSE SOMEONE WAS SMILING OVER ME.

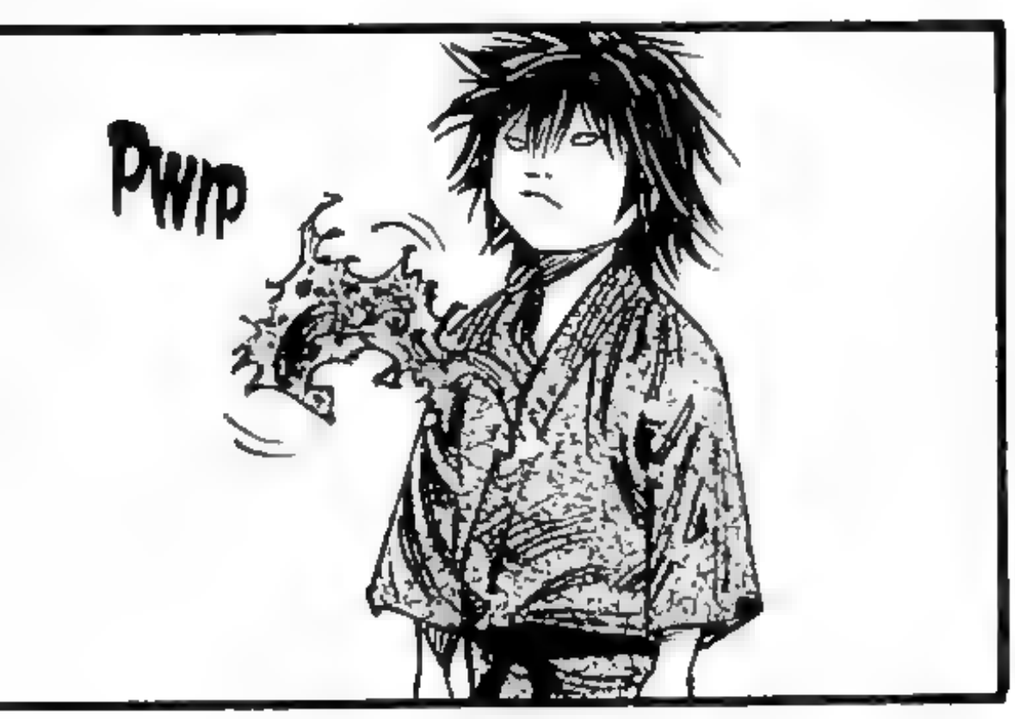
AS LONG AS I HAD SWORD IN HAND...

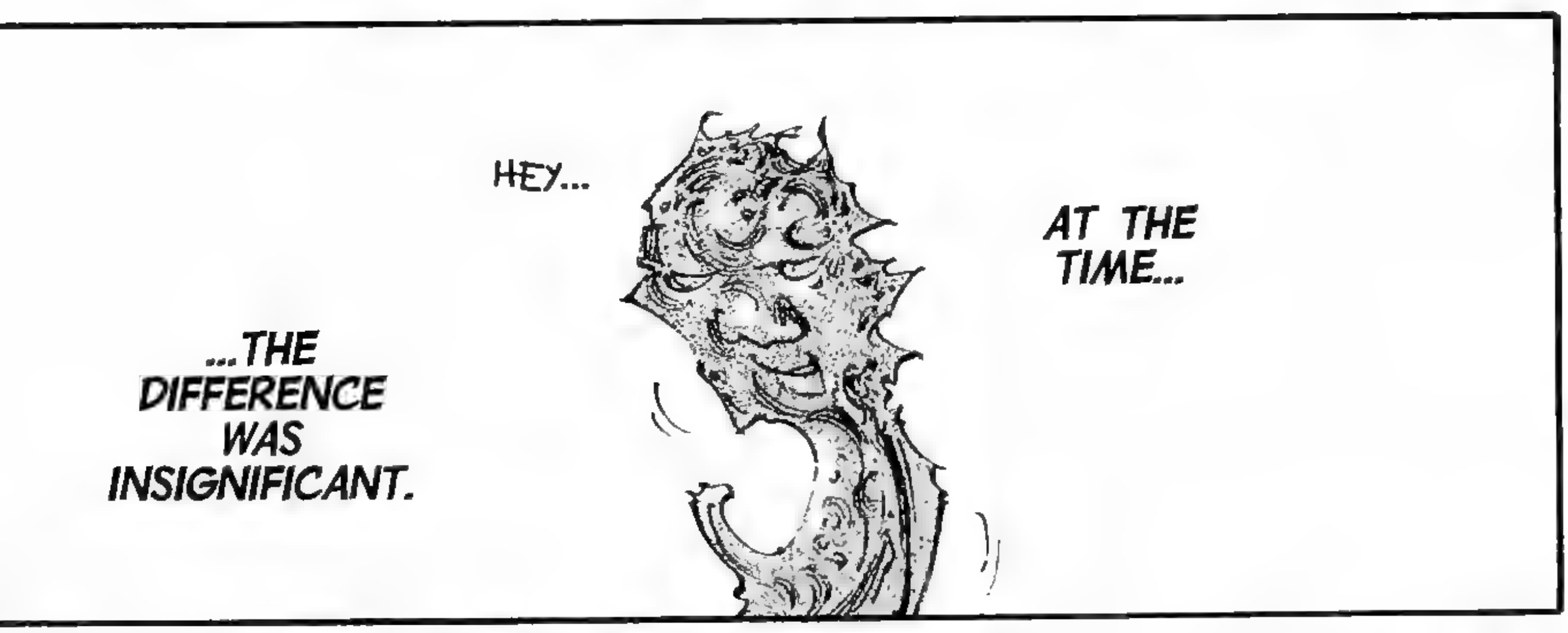
...THERE WAS A LIGHT INSIDE ME.

SOMEONE WITHOUT A NAME.

I FELT IT WASN'T QUITE RIGHT...

INVINCIBLE UNDER THE SUN...





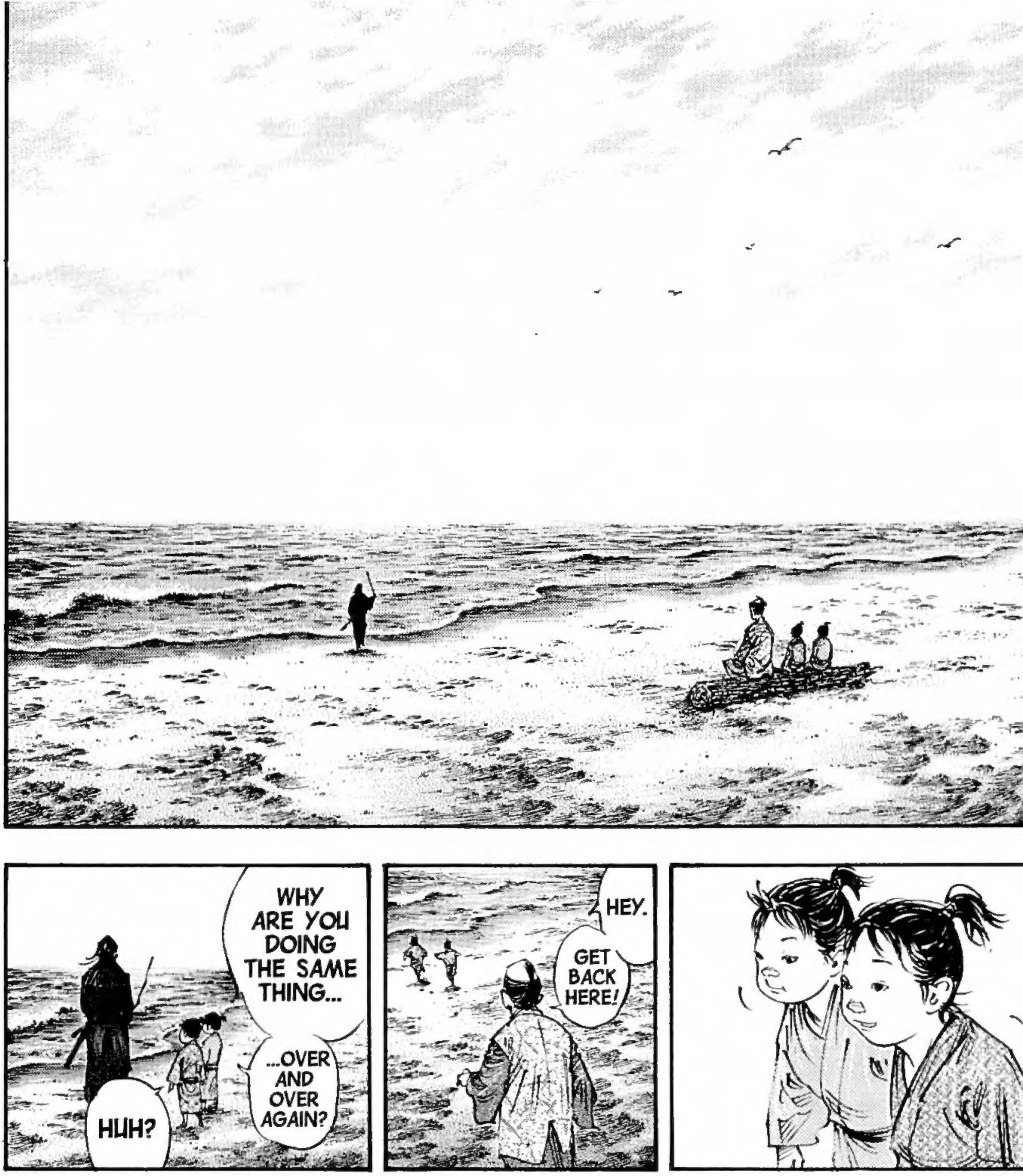
...I'M SORRY I TRIED TO FORCE A SHAPE ONTO IT.
I CALLED IT THE WRONG THING...

IT'S FAR GREATER THAN THAT...
WHAT YOU WERE TRYING TO BE...

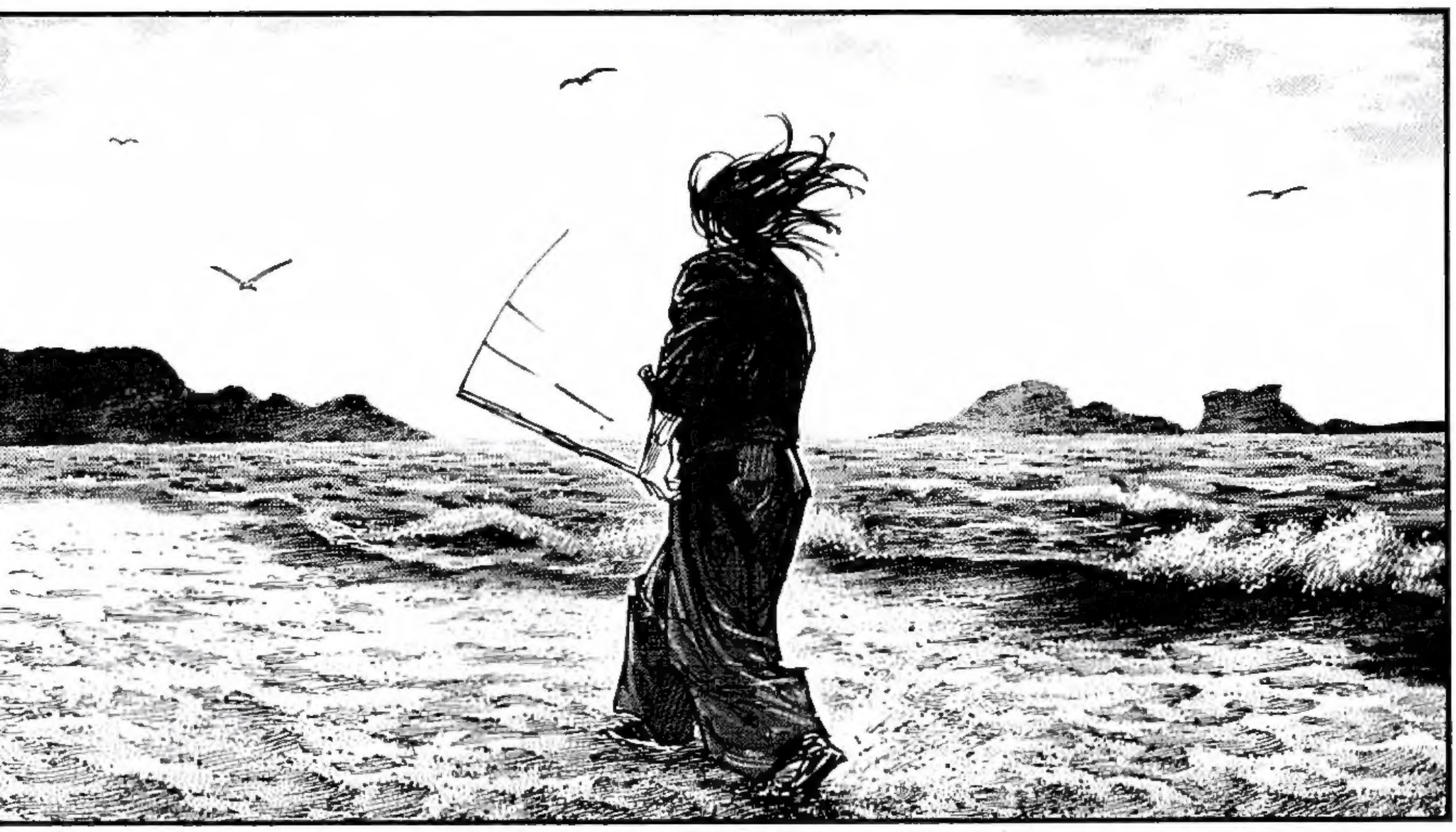
HEH HEH ...

COME ON, SMILE.

MNCH
MNCH


WHY ARE YOU DOING THE SAME THING...
...OVER AND OVER AGAIN?
HUH?
HEY.
GET BACK HERE!
I'M TERRIBLY SORRY.

HE'S DEAF.
LET'S GO.
I GUESS SO.



NOT YET.

LET'S PLAY HIDE AND SEEK.
OKAY.
READY?

MY FRIEND...

I WANT TO SEE YOU.

Vagabond

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